

# HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS PRO BONO TEAM PROMPTS HISTORIC CHANGE IN SOUTH KOREAN LAW

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News

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Leading international law firm Herbert Smith Freehills' pro bono review of South Korea's child-support law has led to new penalties for debtors, the first time the firm's Asia pro bono practice has helped effect legislative change.

The revised law empowers the Korea Child Support Agency to make public the name, age, occupation and address of child-support debtors. It also contains powers to suspend debtors' driving licences and ban them from leaving the country. The Korean Ministry of Gender Equality and Family announced the revised law last month.

Seoul partner [Dana Kim](#) led a team that reviewed sanctions against non-payment of child support in the UK, Australia, Germany, New York and California as part of a larger lobbying effort by the Korea Women Lawyers Association.

"We are proud of the result and proud of the effort by this passionate and dedicated team of lawyers and legal professionals," said Dana. "This is a great example of how the firm's pro bono work can help improve people's lives in their community."

Until the law revision, South Korea had almost no sanctions for child-support debtors. When the Korea Child Support Agency was created in 2015, a government study found that some 83% of single parents hadn't received the child-support payments owed to them. While the debtor figure has improved since then, the agency has until recently lacked the legal sanctions to force non-payers to resolve their debts.

"This is an excellent result! Thanks to the firm's efforts, we changed the world," said Yuna Min, head of the Women Lawyers Division at In-House Counsel Forum, which collaborated with the firm.

"We are delighted that our firm played a part in bringing about such important legislative change in Korea," said [Mike McClure](#), head of Herbert Smith Freehills' Seoul office. "The firm has always sought to promote diversity and inclusion initiatives in Korea. We were the first law firm to host a Women in Business event in 2017 and founded the now annual Women in Arbitration event in 2018 as part of the Seoul ADR Festival. "

Dana worked on the report with Mike, paralegal Helen Eo and former paralegal Sienna Kim in Seoul, and with partner [Dirk Seiler](#) and senior associate [Jin-Bum Yoon](#) in Frankfurt.

## KEY CONTACTS

If you have any questions, or would like to know how this might affect your business, phone, or email these key contacts.



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