

Theresa Amato Executive Director

Theresa Amato is a lawyer and public advocate who was graduated with honors from Harvard in 1986 with a degree in Government and Economics, and from the New York University School of Law in 1989, where she was a Root-Tilden Scholar. After a federal judicial clerkship with the Honorable Robert W. Sweet in the Southern District of New York, and as a staff attorney at Public Citizen Litigation Group, where she was the director of the Freedom of Information Clearinghouse in Washington D.C., Amato founded the Illinois-based Citizen Advocacy Center and served as the executive director for eight years. She ran Citizen Works between 2001-2003, and returned in 2009 to serve as its executive director to educate about and reform contracts of adhesion and excessive corporate power. Amato has also served as the executive director of the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation and was in private practice in Chicago. Amato has experience litigating and supervising the litigation of dozens of lawsuits at all levels of state and federal courts, testifying in front of public bodies, conducting corporate transactional work in the areas of banking, trusts, and securities, philanthropic fundraising and grantmaking, and navigating regulatory agencies. She was also the national campaign manager for two presidential campaigns (2000 and 2004).

Amato has received several public interest honors, including being named a Wasserstein Fellow at Harvard Law School for her dedication to public interest law, and being selected as a Fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, where she led a seminar entitled "Mobilizing for Justice: How to Take on the System and Make a Difference." In the last decade she has won both NYU's and Loyola University of Chicago Law School's Public Interest Awards. In 1997, the *American Lawyer* named Amato at age 32, as one of the 45 young lawyers under 45 outside of the private sector whose work is changing lives. While in law school, Amato served as the Senior Notes and Comment Editor of the *NYU Law Review* and won the Orison S. Marden Award for first place oralist in NYU's moot court competition.

Amato has been profiled in the *New York Times' Public Lives* section and has appeared in many national and international media outlets including the *BBC*, *NPR*, *CNN*, *CSPAN*, *CBS*, *MSNBC*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *LA Times*, and *Chicago Tribune*. Her work has been published in the *New York University Law Review*, *The National Civic Review*, *The Stanford Law & Policy Review* and *The Yale Journal of International Law*, among other publications, and she speaks to audiences around the world about building democracy, transparency, corporate power, human rights, electoral reform, and advancing justice. Amato is licensed to practice law in Illinois, New York, and Washington, D.C.