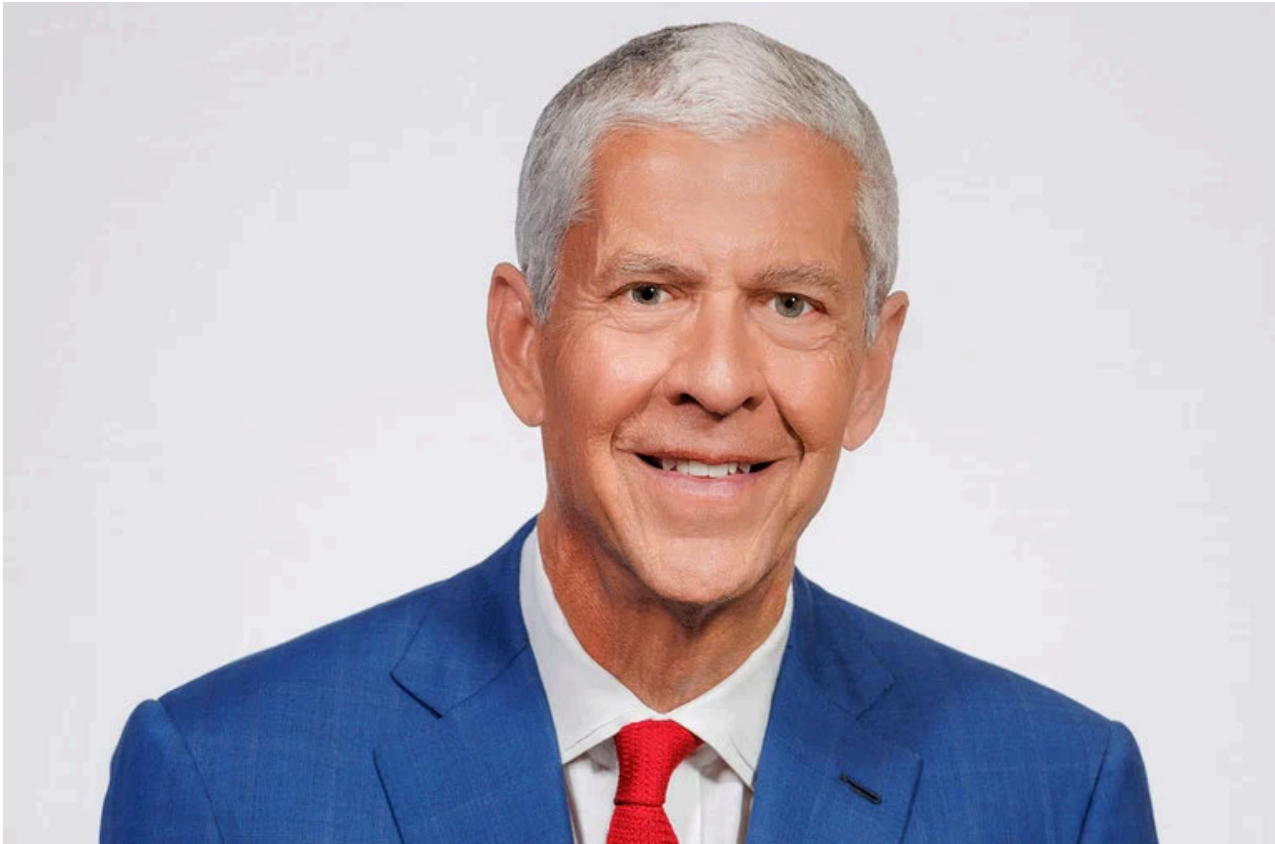


Jury in First Boeing Max 8 Crash Trial Returns \$28.45M Over Ethiopian Air Passenger's Death

A federal jury in Chicago awarded the damages to Shikha Garg, who died in the 2019 crash of Ethiopian Air Flight 302, the second of two disasters involving Boeing's 737 Max 8 aircraft.

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Kline & Specter's Shanin Specter. Courtesy photo

A federal jury in Chicago awarded \$28.45 million to a passenger who died in the 2019 crash of Ethiopian Air Flight 302, the first verdict against Boeing over its 737 Max 8.

After two hours of deliberations, the jury awarded all compensatory damages. Boeing did not contest liability, and no punitive damages were allowed in the trial, which began Nov. 5. The verdict was for the family of passenger Shikha Garg, a United Nations Development Program consultant from India on her way to the U.N. Environmental Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, when she died on the Ethiopian Air flight.

The verdict is the [first to involve a Max 8](#), which was grounded after the 2019 crash that killed 157 people.

“We and the family are gratified by the jury’s verdict,” Garg’s lawyers, Shanin Specter and Elizabeth Crawford, of Philadelphia-based Kline & Specter, said in a statement. “It provides public accountability for Boeing’s wrongful conduct.”

Kline & Specter led a trial team that also included Jonathan Thomas, of Chicago-based Power Rogers, and the assistance of the Chicago-based Clifford Law Firm, which [settled three of its cases](#) last week, including one that was set to go to trial alongside Garg’s case.

The jury’s verdict included \$10 million for Garg’s suffering and emotional distress, \$3.45 million for her husband’s loss of money, benefits, goods and services, \$10 million for his grief, sorry and mental suffering, and \$5 million for his loss of society until he remarried in April 2024.

The Ethiopian Air crash occurred when a new flight control system automatically pitched the plane’s nose downward in order to prevent stalling. The pilots were unable to control the aircraft, which crashed after takeoff in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on a flight to Kenya.

Another Max 8 crash in 2018 involved Lion Air Flight 610 in Indonesia, which killed 189 people.

In a statement, a Boeing spokesperson said, “We are deeply sorry to all who lost loved ones on Lion Air Flight 610 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302. While we have resolved the vast majority of these claims through settlements, families are also entitled to pursue their claims through damages trials in court, and we respect their right to do so.”

Winston & Strawn’s co-executive chairman, Dan Webb, in Chicago, is representing Boeing.

Many of the families of the victims of both Max 8 crashes have fought against the U.S. Department of Justice’s \$1.1 billion nonprosecution agreement with Boeing, pushing [to approve a special prosecutor](#) to pursue a criminal trial against the aircraft manufacturer. The [DOJ’s deal](#) allows Boeing to avoid criminal liability over Max 8 and awards families an additional \$455 million in compensation on top of the \$500 million already provided. This month, U.S. District Judge Reed O’Connor of the Northern District of Texas granted the DOJ’s request to dismiss the criminal case.

Although Boeing resolved most of the Ethiopian Air cases, including four earlier this year, 11 lawsuits remain. U.S. District Judge Jorge Alonso of the Northern District of Illinois had selected five of them for trials.