Dear Colleagues:

I am excited to begin working with all of you. We have an ambitious agenda for the year, and we are fortunate to have so many experienced and dedicated professionals on our committee to work together to meet the committee’s goals.

On August 25, 2011, the Co-Chairs and Vice Chairs discussed a possible meeting schedule and agenda for this committee, as well as a potential subcommittee structure. The purpose of this email is to share our thoughts and solicit feedback. We are also soliciting volunteers! More on this below.

1. Meeting schedule for the year

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE - there will be an in-person meeting on November 17, 2011 in Harrisburg. This is the PBA Committee/Section Day meeting, which will be held at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg East. We have a conference room reserved from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. For those who cannot make November 17 meeting in person but would like to attend in another way, conference call service will be available. Please note that because we are a large group and because it is difficult for the caller to hear what everyone is saying and to engage, those calling in will be able to listen but will not really have the opportunity to engage in discussion. An agenda will be circulated to the committee two weeks in advance of the meeting. If a member will be attending by phone or will not be attending at all, the member can submit their comments and questions in advance to one of the chairs and we will be sure to convey the message to the rest of the committee.

We should have a full committee meeting in-person at least twice a year. The November 17 meeting will count as one. The next full meeting will be scheduled for early Spring 2012. If anyone believes that we should meet more often in-person, please email the chairs of the committee with specific comments.

In addition to the in-person meetings, we should have regular calls more frequently between the subcommittees and at least one of the Chairs. In between those calls subcommittee leaders should update the chairs and the rest of the Immigration Law Committee by email.

2. Subcommittees

We expect that the work of this committee will begin long before the November 17 meeting. To that end, we would like to organize working on particular issues through a subcommittee structure.

The agenda for the first year of this committee’s existence is wide-ranging. As of August 31, our committee consists of 47 members, and it seems that there will be something for every person’s interest.

Based on our first (and only) committee meeting, some of the activities of interest include the following:

Unauthorized/unscrupulous practice of immigration law

Certification of immigration as a specialty practice in Pennsylvania
Legislative advocacy

Outreach and education to community stakeholders including non-profit organizations, law enforcement and schools

Increasing pro bono and low bono representation of immigrants, with a particular emphasis on victims of domestic violence Liaison with other organizations, such as other PBA committees, other county bar associations, the Philadelphia chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition

Please indicate your interest in one of these areas by emailing the chairs. If you feel that there is a substantive issue not included on this list that should be addressed by the committee this year, please let us know.

We look forward to your suggestions and comments.

Best regards,

Cherylle

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