

**Legal Services to the Public Committee  
Conference Call  
September 7, 2006**

Present on the call were: Lorrie Albert, Sandra A. Ballard, David Baxter, Judy Berkman, Norma Chase, Samuel Cooper, Elizabeth Wood Fritsch, Co-Chair, Sylvia Hope Hahn, James Kearney, Christine Kirby, Barbara Kittrell, Samuel W. Milkes, Iva Munk, Elizabeth Price, Arthur N. Read, Robert V. Racunas, M. Samuel Rosenzweig, Dveera Segal, Co-Chair, Cynthia A. Sheehan, Joseph Sullivan, and Charles Thomas Young, Jr.

Chanel Broadus, Dale Schell and David Keller Trevaskis represented the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

The call was chaired by Co-Chairs Fritsch and Segal

Fritsch and Segal welcomed everyone to the call at 1 p.m. and thanked everyone for taking time from their busy schedule to participate in the meeting. Trevaskis provided quick updates on PProbono.net and PALawHelp.org, noting efforts to auto-enroll large user groups such as the LAMP volunteers on PProbono.net.

The Fritsch steered the meeting to a review of the LEGAL SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC COMMITTEE PLAN FOR 2006-2007 YEAR that she and Segal had drafted for Committee Consideration. She noted that the goals for 2006-2007 are based upon the mission of the Legal Services to the Public Committee, that mission being to promote civil legal representation and assistance for the neediest among us in the Commonwealth. With the support of the PBA Pro Bono Office, the committee focuses on issues of concern to the Pennsylvania Legal Assistance Network and to private practice pro bono attorneys.

Fritsch explained that there are currently four standing subcommittees of the Committee: Development, Law Schools, Pro Bono Conference and Local Support. She noted that, over the years, there have also been task forces that have grown out of this Committee to address particular problems and issues. During the past few years, a task force has been working on a state-wide school loan forgiveness and repayment assistance program. The task force recently submitted to the PBA a resolution calling for the establishment of a statewide loan repayment assistance program. This resolution was approved by the PBA Board of Governors and by the PBA House of Delegates in June of this year. (A copy is available on the PBA website at <http://www.pabar.org/probono/pbtrlf.shtml>.) An Implementation Committee has been created to work on implementation of such a statewide program with Fritsch and Segal joining Cooper, Milkes, Price, and Racunas from this call on that Committee. Trevaskis, Albert, Ballard and Kirby will provide research assistance for the new Implementation Committee.

Fritsch noted that the Committee structure for the Legal Services to the Public Committee has been in place as currently structured for a long period of time and she and Segal suggested that it was time to review the Committee structure. Fritsch asked for volunteers to participate in a special Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Structural Changes to the Committee to review the Committee and Subcommittee structure and, after a brief discussion, it was decided that Fritsch and Segal

would constitute this Ad Hoc group and prepare recommendations for the entire Committee to consider at or before the November 16<sup>th</sup> Committee/Section Day meeting.

Fritsch asked members on the call to consider working on a special Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Promote Pro Bono Activities in the state and support pro bono attorneys, noting that such activities might include:

- Encouraging local bar associations to hold recognition events and inviting President Horoho to participate;
- Encouraging and supporting local pro bono training;
- Efforts to involve judges in the promotion and recognition of pro bono volunteers;
- Keeping current the list and description of pro bono programs across the state which is on the PBA website at <http://www.pabar.org/countyprobono.shtml>.

Price and Berkman agreed to help Fritsch and Segal in this effort. There was much discussion about upcoming events celebrating pro bono and talk about how there was a need for a master list of such events. Trevaskis explained that Hank Leone of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, the guru maintaining Paprobono.net, was looking for such events since Paprobono.net runs a pro bono calendar. Trevaskis stated that if people sent him notices of events, he would make sure the events were passed on to Leone, as well as posted on the PBA website. Sullivan mentioned Judge Lazurus and her work to promote pro bono in the First Judicial District with new awards and more; Sullivan suggested that the Co-Chairs invite Lazurus to the meeting of the Committee on Committee/Section Day to share her efforts and to connect to the Committee.

Fritsch stated that any restructuring of the Committee would still require a subcommittee to work on planning and implementing a pro bono conference to be held at PBA statewide meeting next June 20-22, 2007 in Philadelphia. Co-Vice Chair Derek Green has held that role the past two years and Berkman, Milkes, Sullivan and Trevaskis volunteered to work with Green on drafting plans for the conference. This group will present a draft plan for the conference at Committee/Section Day. There was a lot of discussion on the importance of the statewide Pro Bono Conference and regional programs to promote pro bono, especially as regards the goal of attracting more private practice attorneys to the work. Young and Sullivan raised the idea that efforts should be made beyond the actual conference site and Cooper shared his thought that certain annual PBA gatherings should have a pro bono focus added to them. Cooper spoke of targeting the annual Conference of County Bar Leaders as a place to always be promoting pro bono since more leaders of the county bars go to CCBL than any other PBA event. Ballard talked about the idea that if we cannot get private practice lawyers such as business lawyers to come to pro bono events, the Committee needs to go to their events and pitch pro bono. Berkman added that the Philadelphia Bar Association committed to having pro bono elements in every workshop at Philadelphia events, rather than trying to just have standalone pro bono programs.

Fritsch moved the agenda forward by bringing up an issue she and Segal have struggled with—namely, how to get feedback from the Committee as a whole on areas of possible concern that the two Co-Chairs are asked about from other Committees, Sections and Bar leadership. Fritsch also raised a concern about the Committee being more pro-active when it came to proposing, advocating and supporting legislation benefiting those served by legal services and pro bono

programs. There was a general discussion of what kind of mechanism could be established for looking for and reviewing proposed legislation which might impact, positively or negatively, on low income people and victims of domestic violence in the state. There was also a related discussion about developing a process that would enable the Committee, in concert with other PBA committees of sections where possible, to take a position for or against such legislation. Chase's efforts on behalf of common law marriage and Read's work on language issues were posited as great examples of how the Committee has been able to stay on top of an issue because of the hard work of a single member, but there seemed to be general agreement that some sort of system was needed so no single member would have to be responsible for an entire issue in the future. Trevaskis noted that the Legislative Office of the PBA was significantly upgrading its work in this area and Fritsch agreed that a good first step would be for her to contact Nevin Mindlin, the PBA's Legislative Coordinator, to see what ideas he might share with the Committee.

The last item on the call was an update by Sullivan on the proposal from the Philadelphia and Allegheny County Bars on CLE credit for Pro Bono service. There followed a spirited discussion which is captured in the exchange between the Philadelphia Bar and PBI which can be found on the PBA website at <http://www.pabar.org/probono/pbcominfo.shtml>. Kittrell and Price were strong advocates against the proposal. Subsequent meetings of the CLE Board and informal word from the Supreme Court have put this proposal on hold for the foreseeable future.

The meeting ended just past 2 p.m.