PBA Committees: Just Say ‘Yes!’

About 25 years ago, Art Schwab (now Judge Schwab) called and asked me if I would join the council of the PBA Civil Litigation Section. I said, “yes.” Soon, I was attending the section’s council meetings, working with trial lawyers from across the Commonwealth and learning about new Rules of Civil Procedure, changes in the law and recommendations to improve our civil justice system. The next thing I knew, I was helping to plan the annual Civil Litigation Section Retreat. Within a few years, I became chair of the section and found myself at the center of a successful PBA effort to defeat proposed legislation designed to punish lawyers who litigate difficult cases. In addition, I had an opportunity to testify before the House and Senate Judiciary committees on legislation concerning joint and several liability. All of it was an eye-opening and a very worthwhile experience.

After completing my term as chair of the Civil Litigation Section, the late Jim Schadel called and asked if I would join the PBA Professional Liability Committee. I said, “yes.” By becoming active in the committee, I quickly learned far more about the practice of law than I might have ever learned by handling a few professional liability cases. This committee immersed me in the law of lawyering, allowed me to become acquainted with many lawyers from across the state and provided an outlet for my artistic impulses by writing, producing and acting in many of the video vignettes that were used for the PBA Avoiding Legal Malpractice programs. I have derived great satisfaction from my involvement in the Civil Litigation Section and the Professional Liability Committee. I believe that my efforts made a difference, that my work was having an impact and that the section and the committee were providing an important service and benefit to our profession. My involvement in the section and the committee led to other asks, additional PBA appointments, service on the board and leadership at the highest level.

I have exploited my PBA membership. You can, too. Join a PBA committee. Whatever your practice area, special interest or passion, there is a corresponding PBA committee. There are lawyers (and legislators and justices) out there who need your help and input. There is legislation to review and CLE programs to plan. There is a need for your advocacy on behalf of our profession. I am asking you to join a PBA committee. I am asking you to exploit your PBA membership. I am asking you to just say, “yes.”

Sincerely,
Jay N. Silberblatt
PBA president-elect

2022-23 PBA Committee Request Form
Please check the PBA committee(s) you prefer.

- Agricultural Law
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Animal Law
- Appellate Advocacy
- Bylaws
- Charitable Organizations
- Children’s Rights
- Civil and Equal Rights
- Collaborative Law
- Community and Public Relations
- Cybersecurity and Data Privacy
- Community and Public Relations
- Corrections System
- Civil and Equal Rights
- Collaborative Law
- Community and Public Relations
- Corrections System
- Civil and Equal Rights
- Collaborative Law
- Community and Public Relations
- Corrections System

To study questions and problems affecting rural and agricultural interests in Pennsylvania and monitor and/or make recommendations concerning proposals for legislation or regulations relating to such interests.

To address current issues of mediation, arbitration and other alternative dispute resolution processes, including mediation and arbitration of private and public court-connected ADR programs. The committee conducts professional education programs, recommends standards of practice for neutrals and proposes and monitors legislation regarding alternative dispute resolution.

To promote the particular interests of lawyers practicing in the area of animal law, promote the study and understanding of laws, regulations and judicial decisions dealing with animals, and educate the legal community and the public as to the needs to address various animal-related issues.

To promote communication and cooperation between lawyers who practice before the state and federal appellate courts and members of the judiciary and provide the opportunity to identify and address the means to achieving quality practice in all manner of appeals. The committee offers focused educational programs, fosters dialogue between the bench and the bar, explores means and methods to improve and advance the appellate process, and may review and make recommendations concerning the rules of procedure that affect appellate process.

To address current issues regarding the collaborative law dispute resolution process; educate attorneys and the public about the collaborative law dispute resolution process; recommend standards of practice for attorneys using the collaborator law dispute resolution process and monitor, promote and support legislation or rules of court that further the development of the collaborative law dispute resolution process.

To deal with matters of concern to lawyers who are employed by or who represent charitable organizations, public sector lawyers whose work involves charitable organizations and lawyers who serve as directors, officers or volunteers of charitable organizations. The committee offers educational programs relating to the laws governing charitable and other nonprofit organizations.

To study and recommend solutions for children in trial and appellate courts and implements such public education campaigns as are deemed appropriate.
Disability Services
To institute statewide programs to educate both lawyers and the public on issues regarding the legal rights of the disabled. To develop programs that encourage attorneys to focus on representing persons with disabilities, and to help them understand the unique problems they encounter in pursuing their legal rights.

Federal Practice
To promote communication and cooperation between lawyers who practice in federal courts and members of the federal judiciary and provide an opportunity to identify and address the differences between the local district court rules and orders of court that affect practice of law in the eastern, middle and western districts. The committee may review and make recommendations concerning federal legislation and proposed changes to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Criminal Procedure and Bankruptcy Procedure and the Federal District Court Rules.

Gaming Law
To review, study and make recommendations concerning legislative issues regarding the operation, procedure and reform of the state and charitable gaming systems. The committee also develops and recommends measures seeking to improve the administration of the courts and addresses issues of court reform consistent with established PBA policy.

Large Law Firm
To study and make recommendations regarding membership development as retention of attorneys in large firms in Pennsylvania. The committee shall develop programs and services to enhance the value of PBA membership for this group of attorneys. A large law firm is defined as a firm of 50 or more attorneys.

Law-Related Education
To oversee the PBA's programs that educate young people about the rule of law, the history and workings of our form of government, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Lawyers' Assistance
To develop programs to assist impaired lawyers, their law partners, clients and families.

Legal Academics
To provide the opportunity for those in the law school community to study matters relating to the common goal of maintaining the high standards and quality education of future lawyers. The committee is composed of active PBA members engaged in the education of law students as law school faculty and administration.

Legal Career Transitions
To serve as a resource and assist lawyers through the changes and practice transitions associated with transitioning into, within and beyond the profession.

Legal Services for Exceptional Children
To develop programs designed to educate members of the legal profession on current legislation and/or regulations affecting exceptional children and their families.

Legal Services to the Public
To provide assistance in the creation of programs designed to provide for the delivery of legal services to indigent persons within the commonwealth. The committee monitors and makes recommendations concerning all legislation regarding unmet legal needs and pro bono service.

Insurance Staff Attorney
To promote the interests of staff counsel, foster quality professional conduct and provide appropriate service to its members in cooperation with the PBA.

Judicial Administration
To review, study and make recommendations concerning legislative issues regarding the operation, procedure and reform of the state and charitable court systems. The committee also develops and recommends measures seeking to improve the administration of the courts and addresses issues of court reform consistent with established PBA policy.

Medical marijuana and Hemp Law
To keep members of the bar apprised of developments within the field of medical cannabis and hemp law by fostering communications and facilitating continuing education programs in the areas of client representation, industry developments, and ethical and other issues of concern to members. It monitors legislative developments and/or makes recommendations concerning legislation and regulations affecting such interests.

Membership Development
To develop and implement programs to increase the association's membership base and to retain current members. The committee also evaluates, develops and implements new programs and services designed to enhance the overall value of a PBA membership and to generate new revenue for the association.

Military and Veterans' Affairs
To study and make recommendations, provide educational programming and coordinate statewide efforts on legal matters affecting active, reserve and National Guard military service members, veterans and their families.

Minority Bar
To develop programs to promote the issues and concerns of minority attorneys and to study, review and make recommendations concerning all legislation impacting minority citizens in the commonwealth. The committee seeks to encourage more participation in the PBA by members of the minority legal community.

Plain English
To study the effectiveness of strategies used to improve the quality of legal writing and to develop strategies to improve legal writing. The committee serves as a resource for bar committees.

Professional Liability
To monitor and make recommendations concerning lawyers' liability case law and related statutes and administrative developments, including lawyers' liability insurance coverage and market coverage and the market, the formation and operation of any PBA-related lawyer liability insurer and sponsored or endorsed lawyers' liability insurance programs. It conducts legal malpractice avoidance and loss prevention programs.

Quality of Life/Balance
To identify issues in the changing legal marketplace that adversely affect the lawyer's ability to balance his/her professional and personal life. The committee identifies solutions to improve the quality of life of lawyers and develops ways to disseminate those solutions and recommendations.

Senior Lawyers
To serve as the voice of the senior lawyers within the association and to enact services, programs and activities for members to enhance their continued careers and quality of life. The committee serves the interests and needs of the profession and the public by sharing the accumulated knowledge and experience of its members. PBA members age 60 and older qualify for membership.

Shale Energy Law
To keep members of the bar apprised of developments within the field of shale energy law by fostering communications and facilitating education for both attorneys through CLE programming and the public through participation in community relations. The committee also monitors legislative developments and/or makes recommendations concerning legislation and regulations affecting such interests.

Statutory Law
To assist any entity of state government and of the PBA regarding bill draftsmanship and codification. The committee reviews legislation and other proposals to improve Pennsylvania's legislative process and the public's participation therein.

Unauthorized Practice of Law
To investigate all complaints against anyone not authorized to practice law who is alleged to be performing acts or services constituting the practice of law, to take appropriate action against the unauthorized practice of law, to punish or prevent the unauthorized practice of law and to coordinate its activities with those of similar bars in other states.

Women in the Profession
To assess the current status of women in the legal profession and identify barriers that prevent them from full participation in the work, responsibilities and rewards of the profession on current legislation and/or regulations affecting women lawyers and the unique problems they encounter in pursuing their professional careers.