PBA-supported Legislation Addressing Blight and Other Issues Advance at State Capitol

A PBA-supported bill addressing property blight while protecting the rights of real property owners unanimously passed the Senate on June 6 and at press time was on the governor’s desk for signature. Sponsored by Rep. Lynda Culver, H.B. 352 permits a non-owner occupier of a single family dwelling on land not exceeding one-half acre to use adverse possession after no less than 10 years to obtain title to the real property. The bill addresses the issue of blight while protecting the rights of real property owners by keeping intact the requirements for acquiring title to real property by adverse possession and by requiring 10 years before a court action may be brought to acquire title to the property, followed by the owner having one year to respond with an ejectment action. The PBA supports this bill and was heavily involved in the original drafting of the legislation.

H.B. 983, sponsored by Rep. John Lawrence, unanimously passed the Senate Judiciary Committee on June 5 and received second consideration in the Senate the following day. This bill prohibits the award of alimony pendente lite or spousal support to a party who has been convicted of a personal injury crime against the obligor, except in cases where the denial would be manifestly unjust. Prior to the bill’s introduction, the PBA was successful in preventing expansion of the scope of the bill due to concerns regarding potential financial misuse.

A PBA initiative, H.B. 1644, also passed the Senate Judiciary Committee and received second consideration in the Senate. This bill, sponsored by Rep. Kate Klunk, would enact the Pennsylvania Collaborative Law Act to standardize the collaborative law practice. Such law practice seeks to resolve disputes, outside of court litigation, in matters involving family relations (mostly in the context of divorce and custody), and also in the areas of business law and estates law, with the goals of reducing conflict to minimize costs, both financial and emotional. The PBA Collaborative Law Committee has been instrumental in helping the PBA Legislative Department advance this initiative.