



the lgbt bar association
of greater new york

Executive Director

Matthew Skinner, Esq.

January 30, 2017

President

Gennaro Savastano, Esq.

John W. McConnell, Esq.
Counsel, Office of Court Administration
25 Beaver Street
11th Floor
New York, NY 10004

First Vice President

Janice Grubin, Esq.

Dear Mr. McConnell,

Secretary/Second VP

M. Frank Francis, Esq.

I write to the Continuing Legal Education Board of the Unified Court System regarding the December 14, 2016 request for public comment on the proposed New York CLE requirement for diversity, inclusion, and the elimination of bias (“diversity CLE requirement”). Founded in 1978, The LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York (“LeGaL”) was one of the nation's first bar associations for the LGBT legal community, and remains one of the largest and most active organizations of its kind in the country. Serving the greater New York metropolitan area, LeGaL is dedicated to improving the administration of the law, ensuring full equality for members of the LGBT community, promoting the expertise and advancement of LGBT legal professionals, and serving the larger community.

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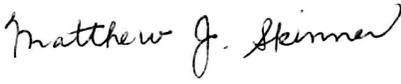
Richard Weber, Esq.

As a signatory to the July 21, 2016 letter to Chief Judge Janet DiFiore, LeGaL continues to strongly support the diversity CLE requirement. Despite increasing acceptance and representation in many areas of the legal profession today, there still remains a great deal of work ahead to overcome the LGBT community’s historic exclusion and underrepresentation. The diversity CLE requirement would be a small, but meaningful, step to getting licensed attorneys from throughout the state to better appreciate the struggles of various minority communities, including the LGBT community.

LeGaL would also look forward to helping New York attorneys meet the diversity CLE requirement through our own offerings, should the proposed amendment to the rule pass. For example, our annual “LGBT Law Year in Review” CLE offers a detailed breakdown of developments in the areas of relationship recognition, family law, employment discrimination, and gender transition. Last year, we also put together a CLE entitled “The Past, Present, and Future of Gay Parenting Law in New York.” Non-LGBT attorneys and/or those that do not regularly practice in these areas could really have their eyes opened to the continuing movement for LGBT equality by spending just a couple of hours every two years at one of these programs.

Please do not hesitate to reach out should the Continuing Legal Education Board have any questions about LeGaL's support of the diversity CLE requirement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew J. Skinner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'n'.

Matthew Skinner, Esq.
Executive Director
LeGaL