



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
LAW DEPARTMENT

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Honorable Janet DiFiore
Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals
Supreme Court – State of New York
230 Park Avenue, Suite 826
New York, N.Y. 10169

Dear Chief Judge DiFiore:

I take this opportunity to support wholeheartedly the proposal urged by New York City bar associations in their July 21st letter for “the licensing and regulatory authorities governing the admission in New York State to include, as a separate required credit, programs regarding diversity and inclusion in the legal profession and programs regarding the elimination of bias.” As Corporation Counsel for the City of New York, I have witnessed countless occasions in which diversity of experience, often grounded in diversity of culture, national origin, race, gender, sexual orientation and religion, has informed the many difficult legal decisions that affect the incredibly diverse population of New York City.

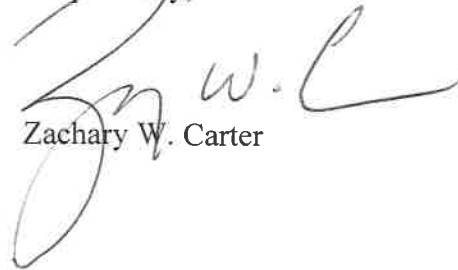
For the last ten years the Law Department has required all of its employees to participate in Diversity and Inclusion programs. The programs have included information that raises awareness about bias, both conscious and unconscious, and enhances dialogue about the impact bias has had on our society. The programs have examined how those biases have directly impacted our employees, as well as our employees’ ability to represent the City of New York effectively. Over the last eight years, we have presented these programs to our employees through a grant from the Anti-Defamation League, and going forward, we are seeking to engage other entities to assist us in an even closer examination of the impact of bias, and how valuing the diversity of our employees and citizens improves our representation of the City.

Law Department programs have always been run with the advice of members of our Diversity Committee, to ensure we examine issues through the lens of actual problems encountered. We have primarily used hypotheticals to portray those issues, and we give our employees an opportunity to discuss the issues with the guidance of trained facilitators. The goal of each program is not only to give each employee a voice, but also an opportunity to practice skills that will enhance their interactions with each other, our clients, and the courts.

The evaluations of our programs by our participants have been overwhelmingly favorable, notwithstanding some initial skepticism. Participants consistently report that they recognize the benefits of the opportunity to have these important dialogues about importance of respect and valuing our differences.

I believe that the proposed CLE requirement will encourage enhanced education concerning the value of diversity in our profession. I urge the adoption of this requirement.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zachary W. Carter'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'Z' and 'C'.

Zachary W. Carter