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Networkofbarleaders@gmail.com

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February 15, 2017

**VIA EMAIL & U.S. MAIL**

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

**Re: Proposed Diversity and Inclusion and Elimination of Bias CLE Requirement  
for New York State Attorneys**

Dear Mr. McConnell,

The Network of Bar Leaders (the “Network”, also known as NOBL) is a coalition of 50 member bar associations dedicated to bringing together the leadership of the diverse bar associations of the greater New York Metropolitan area. Formed over 25 years ago, Network provides a forum for the exchange of information and ideas and serves as a vehicle for joint action on issues of mutual concern and pending legislation. The Network is the legal community's most diverse institution - it includes each of the five county bar associations, numerous citywide and statewide specialty groups, specialty bar associations dedicated to every field of practice, as well as ethnic and religious bar associations. The Network enthusiastically supports the Committee on Continuing Legal Education’s proposed amendment of the rule addressing mandatory continuing legal education (CLE) for attorneys recommending the addition of a Diversity and Inclusion and Elimination of Bias requirement to the New York State MCLE requirements. Enclosed, please find our consensus resolution on this that was passed on February 13, 2017.

Promoting diversity and inclusion and working collectively to eliminate bias in the legal profession is of the utmost importance. The proposed CLE requirement helps to carry out this purpose as it provides the legal profession with the ability to recognize unconscious bias and to have the knowledge to better foster diversity and inclusion within the profession. This mandatory CLE will help our profession match and understand the populations we have a duty to serve.

Our state and the country as a whole are becoming increasingly diverse, and the legal profession and practice of law must continue to reflect this growth. Notably, other states, such as California and Minnesota have already established diversity and inclusion CLE requirements for their attorneys. Oregon and others require it as part of their ethics requirements. In addition, the American Bar Association's House of Delegates has adopted a resolution encouraging programs on diversity and inclusion in the legal profession as part of mandatory or minimum continuing legal education requirements. New York should follow suit.

As outlined more fully in the Committee on Continuing Legal Education's report to the New York State Bar Association's House of Delegates, which has our enthusiastic and full support, a diversity and inclusion CLE component has widespread backing from several other bar associations in the state, and would bolster a diverse legal profession that is able to better support the clients we serve.

Thank you for your consideration of this important and timely initiative.

Sincerely,



Diana Sen  
President  
The Network of Bar Leaders