

## **2017 ANNUAL MEETING REMARKS**

### **Elizabeth Donoghue, Chair, New York City Bar Association's Executive Committee**

Good Evening. Welcome to the City Bar Annual Meeting. My name is Elizabeth Donoghue, and for the last year I have had the privilege of serving as the Chair of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee has had an important year. In addition to our usual governance, our activities have focused on protecting the core principles of the City Bar, specifically the rule of law, ensuring the independent judgment of the judiciary, and supporting efforts to provide counsel and legal services to litigants in need. John Kiernan will touch upon the policies behind these efforts in his remarks.

In keeping with a major focus this year, we urged the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee to pursue a searching inquiry in the confirmation hearing for the position of Attorney General, the first time in its history the City bar has ever communicated a public evaluation of a nominee for a cabinet position. We created a working group of the Executive Committee to quickly address the rule of law when a rapid response may be necessary—as was the case during the travel ban.

Other committee work included extending the terms of 10 special committees and councils, and changing the name of the Legal Services for Persons of Moderate Means Committee to the Monday Night Law/Moderate Means Committee to better effect the work of the Committee.

Our internal governance included reviewing and approving the Operating and Capital budgets for Fiscal Year 2017/18 and hearing the annual report from the Audit Committee.

We also reviewed and approved proposed salaries for the eight highest paid employees and approved the creation of three new dues categories (solo practitioners, non-admitted JDs and retired lawyers) who have been Association members for fewer than 25 years. After careful consideration, the Executive Committee approved a slight increase for select categories of membership. Internal governance also included an update of the Association's conflict of interest and whistleblower policies to conform with changes to the Not for Profit Law. And we nominated a slate of 10 members to run for 5 positions on the 2017/18 Nominating Committee.

Throughout the year, the Executive Committee received briefings from the City Bar staff regarding their programs—from our Senior Policy Counsel, to the Director of the Library, to the Director of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, among others. We are very proud of their work and at times have even been entertained by their reports (learning how our library was transformed into a runway during fashion week was a highlight this year!).

Facing out from the Association, we appointed a City Bar designee to the Board of Directors of the Legal Services NYC. We also participated in the Task Force on Puerto Rico chaired by City Bar Vice President and Executive Committee member, Roger Maldonado.

The Executive Committee reviewed seven candidates for the position of Associate Justice of the NY State Court of Appeals, finding them all to be qualified. We also reviewed and found Neil Gorsuch qualified to serve as Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court.

I'd like to thank Bret Parker, John Kiernan and all the members of the Executive Committee, for your wisdom, abilities, institutional memory, for sharing your individual perspective, and your humor. I can say that our core principles are stronger than ever.

I will now hand the podium over to Damian Schaible, who will give the Report of the Treasurer.

Thank you.