

# The New York City Bar Association's Pro Bono & Legal Services Committee [1971-1980]

Chairs: Otto Obermaier, Henry Freedman, Gail Koff and Susan B. Lindenauer

NEW YORK  
CITY BAR

## Legal Assistance for Persons of Moderate Means

- Investigated the use of prepaid legal services plans and the establishment of neighborhood legal clinics
- Recommended that the Association of the Bar take the lead in establishing an actuarially sound City-wide pre-paid legal services plan on an experimental basis
- Submitted report to the Executive Committee of the Association on the benefits of prepaid legal services
- Chairman of the Committee testified in state legislative hearings in support of legislation to authorize and regulate prepaid legal services plans

## Provided Support for Legislation Establishing a Federal Non-Profit Legal Services Corporation (Legal Services Corporation)

- Sent multiple reports on the issue to members of Congress
- Gave presentations to Senator Javits and his staff
- Appeared before a Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor

## Permission to Practice Under Section 495(5) of the Judiciary Law

- Reviewed applications by organizations with benevolent or charitable purposes which were submitted to the Appellate Divisions, and recommended for or against approval
- Recommended approval of two petitions submitted to provide prepaid legal services. The Appellate Division rejected both plans. Decision was appealed to the Court of Appeals and the Committee submitted an amicus brief. Court of Appeals reversed the Appellate Division and the two plans were approved.
- Recommended that the law be amended to permit not-for-profit legal services corporations to operate without special review by the courts, provided such corporations met certain statutory standards
- Prepared reports with respect to the proposed amendments to Section 495 of the Judiciary Law
- Played a crucial role in getting the law amended so that not-for-profits did not have to comply with more stringent requirements than for-profit corporations

## The Use of Paraprofessionals in Legal Services Offices

- Cooperated with the New York State Bar Association in the development of guidelines for the use of paralegals in legal services offices

## Legal Referral Program

- Studied legal referral services throughout the country
- Prepared a proposal for a legal referral service
- Prepared a Pro Bono Directory

## Ethics and Professional Responsibility

- Developed proposals concerning the canons of ethics and professional responsibility
- Drafted a report on the Code of Professional Responsibility with respect to its impact upon the delivery of legal services, i.e., a review of its provisions in relation to advertising and publicity in general; solicitation, fee fixing, and the unauthorized practice of law
- Submitted a comprehensive discussion paper to the ABA Special Commission on the Evaluation of Professional Standards