

Maryland State Bar Association
MILITARY LAW COMMITTEE

Fifth Committee Meeting
January 14, 2009 6:00 PM
520 W. Fayette St Baltimore, MD 21201

MINUTES

I. Welcome

In Attendance: Justin Browne, Barbara Edin, Joe Pokempner, Turhan E. Robinson, John Price, John Osing, and Ravi Kambhampaty

II. Member Outreach

- A.** Discussed creating an invitation letter to Maryland Defense Force (MDF) attorneys to join Committee. It was also suggested to exchange roster lists with MDF to encourage members to consider joining.
- B.** James Butler provided an update list of military installations. Committee members were asked to identify Coast Guard Reserve, Marine Reserve, and Navy Reserve units in Maryland. Attendees identify Curtis Bay and Ocean City as Coast Guard sites. Ravi volunteered to identify POCs and ROTC Battalions.

III. Walter Reed Project

- A.** Mr. Robinson is going to determine what other entities (*e.g.*, Attorney General) are donating to see how the Committee can join their efforts.
- B.** Mr. Robinson offered to coordinate tours at Walter Reed to visit wounded warriors and view the new rehab facility. Because the Committee plans to visit the DC area during its next meeting (2/4/09), he will make arrangements for that date. The Committee will plan a second visit in the future with hopes to visit at least once in the fall/winter and once in the spring/summer.

IV. Referrals

- A.** Justin informed the meeting participants about a recent increase in individuals contacting the Committee (via Justin or Charles) to ask for attorney referrals. To date, these have been circulating among the Committee via the email list. Meeting attendees discussed additional mechanisms identifying the Baltimore City Bar Ass'n (BC). Mr. Price mentioned there is an ABA conference regarding lawyer referrals on or about Oct. 28-30, 2009. Justin will follow-up with MSBA to determine if there is any formal policy and then explore the BC program to identify best practices and elements of a model program.

V. Veterans Clinic/Veterans Court

- A.** Justin update the Committee regarding his meeting with professors at the University of Maryland School of law. The school is very interested in establishing a traditional law clinic at the school; however, they identified funding as a primary barrier.

- B. Mr. Price recommended short-term alternatives, including partnering with other organizations such as Legal Aid.
- C. The law school was also responsive to the idea of working to support researching the need for a veterans court in Maryland, identifying best practices and models to emulate, and exploring alternatives to a stand-alone court, particularly in light of a case pending before the Maryland Court of Appeals in which the constitutionality of problem-solving courts is being challenged. *See Robert Calvin Brown II v. State of Maryland.*

VI. Veterans Benefits Training

- A. Justin updated the group regarding the recently submitted ABA grant application for an emeritus attorney pro bono program and planned future training for attorneys to support veterans accessing their benefits in partnership with the Homeless Persons Representation Project, Pro Bono Resource Center, and the University of Maryland School of Law. Justin provided details regarding another program, the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program, which provides free training on handling veterans appeals cases before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims in exchange for providing pro bono services to a veteran. To provide this training in Baltimore space is required as well as funds for copying the manual provided to attendees (appx. 80 pages each). Justin proposed approaching local law firms. Mr. Robinson suggested the Dept. of General Services in Baltimore City which provides classroom space.

VII. Pamphlets

- A. Justin explained that the Committee was looking into making “know your (benefits) rights pamphlets available to veterans. Members noted that some organizations already make these available, at least regarding state benefits. Mr. Pokempner provided a illustrative pamphlet on educational benefits. Mr. Price recommending exploring the MSBA Bar Foundation and Baltimore City Foundation for funding.

VIII. Tax Center Program

- A. The two programs were described again. Justin noted the MSBA Taxation Section’s support of the program. A question was raised about student participation. Justin and Ravi will coordinate with the program POCs to determine whether students can support these programs. Next year the Committee needs to advertise the programs earlier.

IX. Meeting Adjourned

- A. Next meeting will be Feb. 4th in the DC area preceded by a visit to Walter Reed.