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6 December 2010
9:30 a.m.
Annapolis, MD

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION MEETING

1. **Update on Domestic Violence Initiative with Office of the Vice President.** Venable LLP has agreed to provide three-years of funding for a one-year fellowship for a recent law graduate from the University of Baltimore who will serve at the House of Ruth's Protective Order Advocacy Representation Project (POARP) at the Baltimore City District Court.
2. **Limited Scope Rules & Forms.** The MSBA distributed the rules to all Section Councils for comment. The Family & Juvenile Law Section Council endorsed the rules with comments. The Delivery of Legal Services Section Council voted unanimously to endorse the rules and forms. The Tax Section made no comment but had no concerns. The Commission held a general discussion of the rules and forms and adopted several changes. The Commission will review the final draft at the next meeting.
3. **SRL Committee.**
 - a. **Self-Help Centers.** Plans are underway to enhance the Center by providing access via phone, email, and Live Chat. A draft rule has been developed to address some of the consumer law issues raised during the Commission's public inquiry process.
 - b. **Public Input.** The SRL Committee decided to allow the Public Input Subcommittee to lapse as its original goal has been fulfilled.
 - c. **Media Development.** The subcommittee has posted a video on *Bringing a Small Claim* on the Commission's website. More e-learning videos are planned.

4. ADLS Committee.

- a. **Civil Right to Counsel.** The subcommittee's implementation document was developed. It sketches out how a right might be implemented, if the right were ever established by legislation or litigation. The fiscal narrative is the first such document we know of to be done in such detail by any state. The Commission unanimously adopted these two documents.
- b. **Fee-Shifting White Paper and Draft Statute.** The primary purpose of the subcommittee's work product was to follow-up on the Commission's recommendation for a generic fee-shifting statute to: 1) create a provision for an award of attorney's fees to a prevailing party in an action to enforce rights arising under Maryland law; and 2) attempt to render more uniform the determination of an attorney fee award under the 80 or more fee-shifting provisions that already exist under various Maryland laws. The white paper was unanimously endorsed.
- c. **LARP.** The ADLS Committee reviewed HB 703 as requested. Among other comments, the Committee recommends that the program remain a part of the existing program, but that it be enhanced by charging an additional \$100 fee to appear *pro hac vice*, and that fee be dedicated to civil legal services programs. We will redraft the letter and circulate it for comment, prior to sending to the legislature.
- d. **Fee Waiver Modifications.** The ADLS Committee recommended changes to the Circuit Court and District Court fee schedules, as a response to concerns heard from providers and public defenders. The matter was referred back to the Committee for revisions.

5. **Critical Barriers Committee.** The Committee made three recommendations relating to translators and translated materials. The recommendations were adopted unanimously. It was recommended they be forwarded to Frank Broccolina for consideration and presentation to the Cabinet.
6. **Definitions & Standards Committee.** The Committee presented a proposal for awards to be made by the Commission. The awards proposal was unanimously adopted.
7. **Public Education Committee.** The Committee has completed work on the posters which have now been printed and are available for distribution. The Committee will be working on other mechanisms for public education and will continue to work with the Office of the Communication and Public Affairs.
8. **Safety, Accessibility & Convenience Committee.** The courts have recently provided updated information about ADA coordinators and they are in the process of doing new ADA compliance surveys for each location. The Judiciary's website is currently being updated with the assistance of consultants at UMBC. The office of Emergency Preparedness and Court Security will be assisting courts in purchasing courtroom cameras.