

Section one of strongest advocates for State Bar's New York legislative agenda



Wagner

As the June 2010 legislative session drew to a close, the Family Law Section's Executive Committee and three key section committees were occupied on literally a daily basis, as various bills moved to the New York State Legislature's floor for debate.

The Executive Committee delivered to the Legislature several memos pertaining to various bills. In the midst of all of this activity, the Executive Committee held a meeting on June 4, 2010 during which the major focus of discussion and action was then-pending legislation.

The section was at the forefront of support for the official State Bar posi-

tion in favor of no-fault divorce, which was signed into law on Aug. 13, 2010. In prior legislative proposals, upon which the section had commented, the temporary maintenance guidelines (also signed August 13 and effective Oct. 12, 2010) also would have been applicable to permanent maintenance.

In compromise, the new guidelines law applies only to temporary awards, but directs the Law Revision Commission, in reports due in May and December 2011, to "review the maintenance laws of the state" and to "review and assess the economic consequences of divorce on the parties."

At its summer meeting, the section resolved that a top priority would be to send a position memo to the state's Law Revision Commission (LRC), which was approved on Nov. 19, 2010 and then transmitted to the LRC. Our

legislative committee leaders have met with the LRC and will continue to communicate the section's input on these important issues.

Core focus

The section has continued to fulfill its core mission of providing its members with the very best in continuing legal education (CLE).

The summer 2010 meeting delivered a very well-received program devoted to the 30th anniversary of the Equitable Distribution Law and the 21st birthday of the Child Support Standards Act. The section's CLE Committee ensured that our members had access to a timely review of all of the new legislation, by offering a live webcast on Sept. 21, 2010, to which hundreds of attorneys subscribed and which is still available at www.nysba.org. Our well-attended

fall 2010 seminars offered expanded coverage of recent developments.

If you practice in this area and are not a member of the Family Law Section, we encourage you to join. Please attend our Annual Meeting luncheon on January 27, at which Chief Judge of the State of New York Jonathan Lippman will deliver the keynote address, to be followed by an informative 2-credit CLE program entitled, "Matrimonial Update." ♦

Wagner, Family Law Section chair, is a principal at McNamee, Lecluser, Titus & Williams, P.C. in Albany, where he chairs its Matrimonial and Family Law Department. He is a town justice for the Town of Schoharie, Rensselaer County, and is a faculty member for the Advanced Judicial Education programs for Town and Village Justices.