

CBA LPRC POSITION REQUEST FORM

The CBA Pro Bono Committee **position request** is as follows:

- 1) Proposed legislative or regulatory concept:
The Pro Bono Committee supports the Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act of 2017.
- 2) A plain language explanation and rationale for advancing this position:
Briefly, this Act would amend Title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants or enter into contracts with public and private entities to provide pro bono legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness. Such grants and contracts are subject to the availability of funds. As defined in the Act, “pro bono legal services” includes legal services related to housing, family law, assistance in obtaining public benefits, and, to a more limited extent, criminal defense.

Indigent veterans represent a significant number of pro bono clients in Connecticut, as they are often discharged with service-connected illnesses and few employment opportunities. Consequently, some of those veterans need legal help to obtain benefits and overcome housing and family stressors so that they can move on with their lives. This Act would provide additional resources to our legal aid providers so that they can serve a greater number of indigent veterans. This crucial legal aid can improve the veterans’ capabilities, can restore family activities, and reduce the cost of other social services. Additionally, our legal aid providers have been under tremendous financial stress, with little relief expected in the next budget. This Act would partially alleviate that financial stress. And most importantly, the Act expresses a nation's gratitude.

This bill fits squarely within the Pro Bono Committee's mission to facilitate the delivery of competent legal services to the public, particularly those in the greatest need. Although it was not enacted in 2017, having this bill on the CBA's legislative agenda will strongly emphasize the CBA's commitment to expanding pro bono representation. Furthermore, it is likely that we will see similar bills in the future; pointing out that those bills align with the CBA's legislative agenda will increase the chance the HOD will authorize supporting them.

- 3) Is draft regulation, legislation or proposed bill included?
No.
- 4) What is the date of any legislative hearing, if known?
No hearing date scheduled.
- 5) Was this position previously approved by the CBA? If so, when does/did it expire?
Yes. It was approved by the HOD on September 18, 2017 and expired at the end of the 2020 Legislative session.
- 6) Is the CBA section or committee seeking to join a previously approved CBA section or committee position?
No.
- 7) Potential or actual CBA opposition from another CBA section or committee?
None Expected.
- 8) Strength of section position (including process and results of section vote taken on issue):

9) Unanimous

10) Fiscal impact (on the state):
None.

11) Are you seeking “fast-track” approval?¹
No.

¹ A “fast track” recommendation will be submitted to the House of Delegates (HOD) or Board of Governors (BOG) at its next scheduled meeting (or, if between meetings of the HOD or BOG and during the legislative session, to the Executive Committee), and is warranted only when the Legislative Policy & Review Committee concludes that further analysis and study is unnecessary and where there is legitimate time pressure to address pending legislation.