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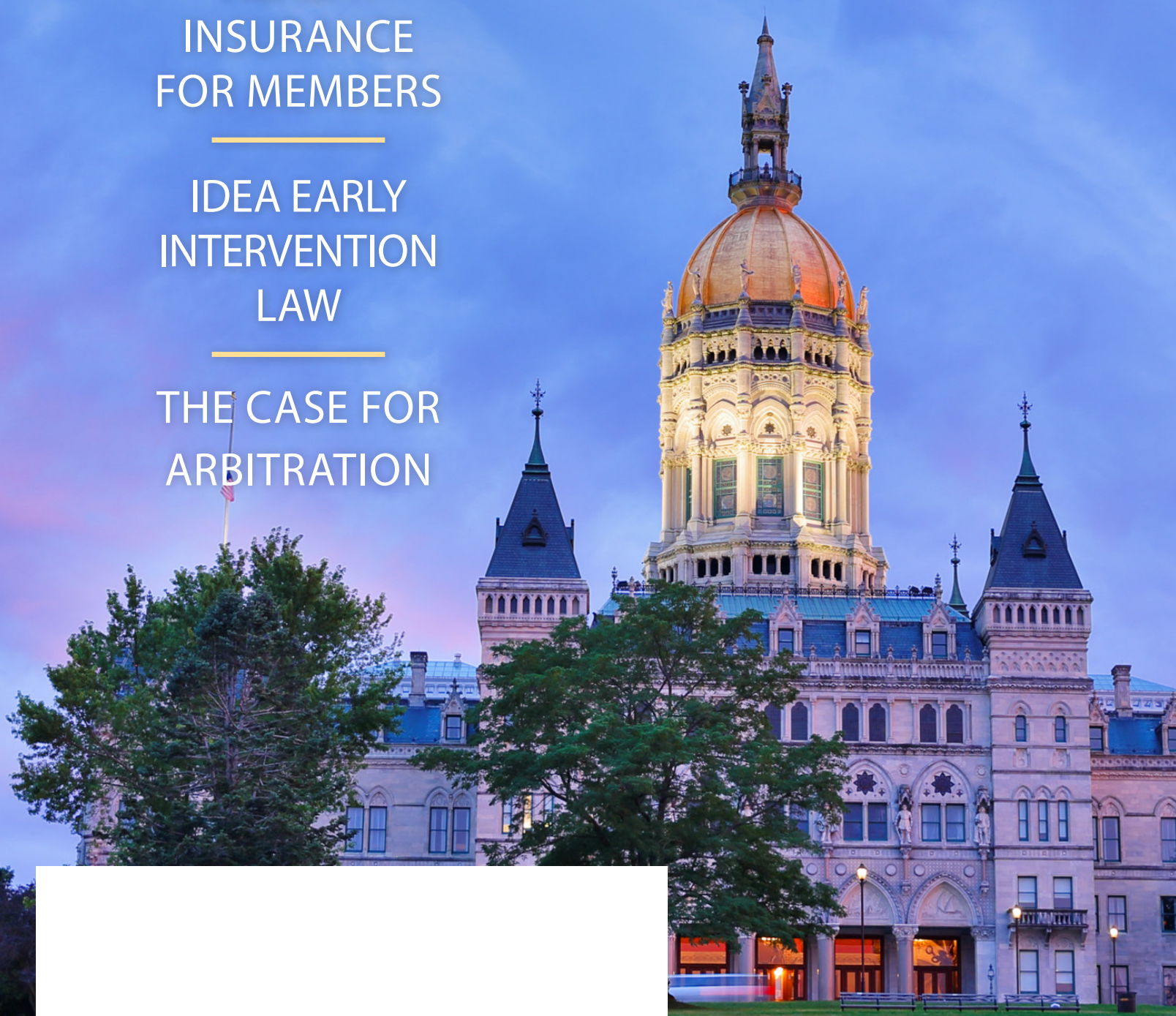
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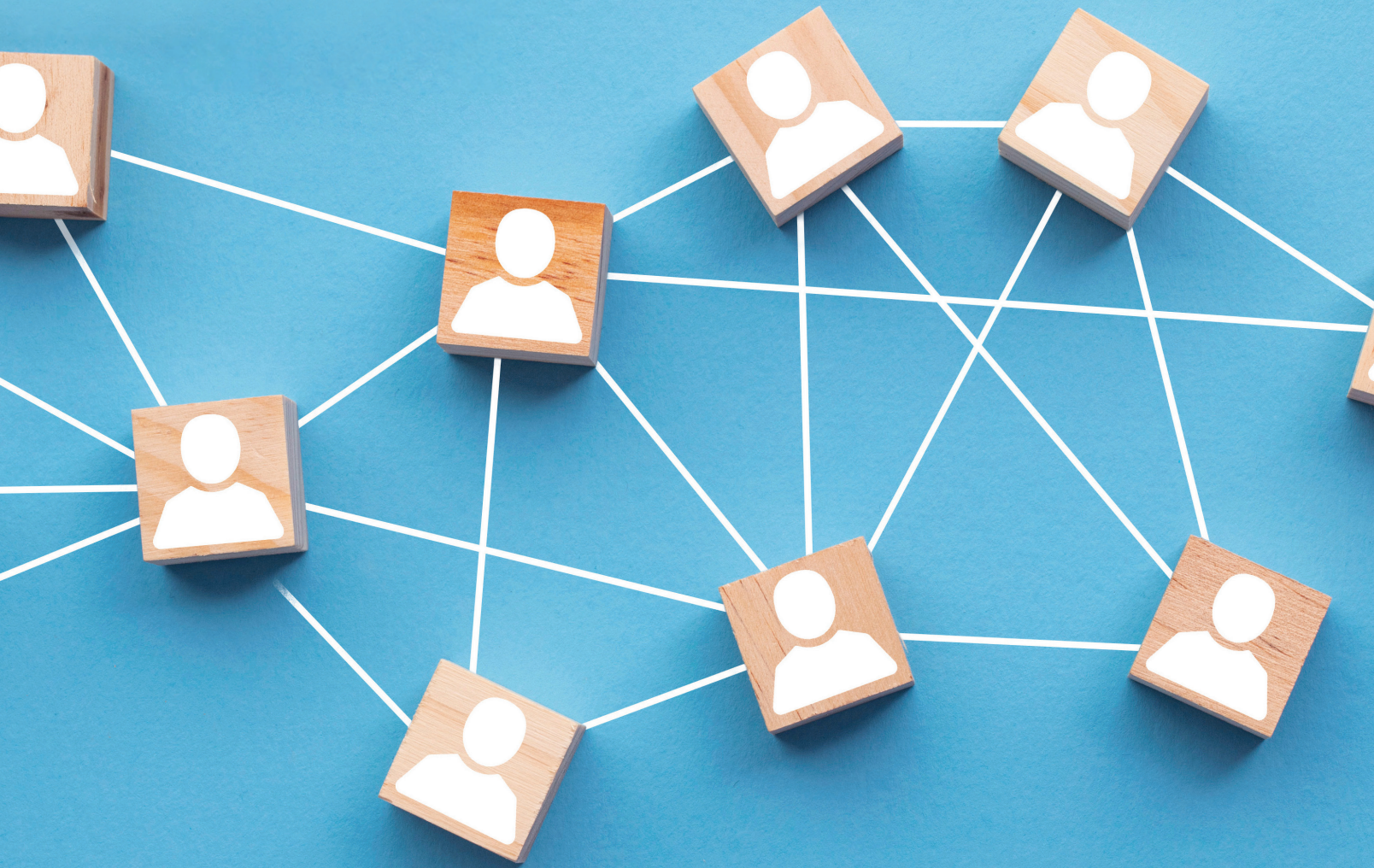
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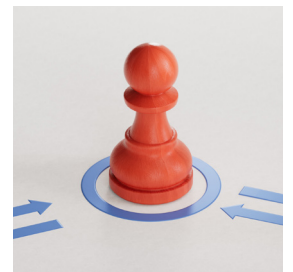
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A Fond Farewell

By EMILY A. GIANQUINTO

Below is a reprint of Emily's Gianquinto's outgoing presidential speech from the 2026 Annual Meeting and Luncheon.

I sincerely cannot believe it's been nearly a year since I stood on this stage and was installed as president of this association. I didn't fully believe past presidents when they told me how fast time would pass. I should have trusted them.

Our association was formed on June 2, 1875, meaning that today marks the official close of our 150th anniversary. Today is our birthday—we turn 151 years old.

For more than a century and a half, the Connecticut Bar Association has stood as a voice for the legal profession, an advocate for justice, and a place where lawyers come together to learn, lead, and serve. Throughout this anniversary year, we have had the opportunity not only to celebrate our rich history (including in black tie, as promised!) but also to consider our responsibility to the future of our profession and to strengthen the bonds between our members.

As my presidential year comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on a year that was both historic for our association and deeply meaningful for me personally. Serving in this role has been the honor of my life. I will truly miss being your president.

One of my favorite things about being president is having the opportunity to speak to new admittees to the bar at the swearing-in ceremonies in the fall and the spring. I attended my last one last week, where just 24 new lawyers were admitted.

Emily A. Gianquinto is the CBA's 102nd president. Attorney Gianquinto is special counsel at McCarter & English LLP, where she counsels employers on day-to-day employment matters and represents them before federal and state courts, administrative agencies, and mediation and arbitration panels. Her experience includes litigating all manner of business disputes.



Because the new lawyer class was so small, the ceremony took place in the beautiful Supreme Court room itself, surrounded by the portraits of our past chief justices and by historic murals, including one of the signing of the fundamental orders, the first written constitution in our country.

I spoke to the new lawyers about (of course) the importance of joining at least one and preferably several bar associations. I also told them about the critical role of collegiality and civility in our profession and especially in our small bar, as well as about the importance of taking care of themselves and making time for their loved ones and the hobbies, interests, and past times that sustain them.

Those comments echoed my theme for this bar year—connecting our community.

The practice of law is rewarding, and important, but it can also be lonely. Whether you're a solo practitioner, work in a large or small firm, are in government service, work for a legal aid organization, or in the courts, it is easy to become consumed by the demands of clients, cases, deadlines.

One of the things I love most about this bar association, and bar associations in general, is the many ways in which we can bring lawyers together. For CLEs, happy hours, community service, fundraisers, galas, section meetings, trivia nights and more.

Over the past year, I've enjoyed representing our association at events big and small, meeting new people from our bar and others, hearing inspiring speeches, honoring lions of the bar and community heroes, doing community service, celebrating the significant growth of our pro bono and civics education programs. I've line danced and salsa danced and attended wellness events. I've spoken about some of our events and initiatives at national meetings. I've been consistently surprised by how many members read the president's message in our magazine each month and have appreciated the feedback each month.

But while anniversaries, and large annual meetings like today, invite us to look backward, our greatest accomplishments this year have been those that looked forward.

I've spent a lot of time with members and leaders of our YLS, and if they are any sign, our future looks very bright indeed. I've also spent a lot of time with the current and future leaders of other bar associations, because the truth is that we all serve the same people, face the same challenges, and have the same goals. By working together, we are all stronger.

“For more than a century and a half, the Connecticut Bar Association has stood as a voice for the legal profession, an advocate for justice, and a place where lawyers come together to learn, lead, and serve. Throughout this anniversary year, we have had the opportunity not only to celebrate our rich history (including in black tie, as promised!) but also to consider our responsibility to the future of our profession and to strengthen the bonds between our members.

As my bar year isn't quite over yet, I'm pleased to announce three initiatives that will be rolling out over the next few weeks.

First, we are publishing a special stand-alone issue of our CT Lawyer magazine focused exclusively on the rule of law. It will contain essays from more than 50 people discussing why the rule of law is important and what it means to each of them. Lawyers, judges, politicians, leaders of legal aid organizations, immigration advocates, educational and other community leaders penned submissions. Our hope is that this issue is distributed not only to all of our members but also to members of the public, for example at civics education programs.

Second, we are starting a targeted trial of a new member benefit called LawQi, which is an interactive AI learning system. This program allows you to learn at your own pace about how to use AI tools competently, ethically and professionally in your practice. The system presents new modules to you based on how fast you are learning new concepts, so it's in a way tailored to your level of experience. We are rolling that out now to a few sections first and then will make it available to all members.

Third, I hope you all know that we have continued to work hard to secure the ability to pool our membership together for the purposes of securing health insurance. While we still have not had success in the legislature on this issue, I am extremely happy to announce that effective today, we are launching a new solo and individual member health insurance benefit.

This is access to a fully funded health plan using the networks of Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) and another insurer, with both HDHP and PPO coverage options and options for coverage for only you, you and your spouse, or you and your family. Enrollment is simple—no medical underwriting or health questions, you can sign up on the first of each month, with coverage beginning on the following month after you've paid one monthly premium. You can sign up and cancel at any time.

If you scan the QR code on the sign at your table, you'll be taken to a website where you can read more, look up whether your providers and prescriptions are covered, and start the process. Rates are negotiated specifically for Connecticut attorneys.

We'll be sharing more about this valuable new member benefit in future communications.

These three new offerings reflect the value of membership in the CBA. We're reaffirming the principles that form the foundation of our legal system by highlighting the myriad ways the rule of law impacts our lives. We're providing valuable edu-

cation on emerging technology to ensure our members can use it effectively and within our ethical boundaries. And we're offering an affordable, flexible health care plan option in the face of costs that are rising so high and so fast that they're making it hard to do business.

All of us in leadership at the CBA know that our work to serve the needs of our membership will never be done, but we will continue to work hard to provide practical benefits that address the real-world problems faced by our members.

Finally, as we conclude our anniversary year, I am filled with gratitude.

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers, section and committee leaders, officers, and members of our governing boards.

Huge thank you to our staff, who does all the work behind the scenes that lets me get up here and announce initiatives like these and who put on yet another great CLC.

Thank you to the countless members who gave their time, talent, and energy to this association.

Thank you to McCarter & English for letting me spend a ridiculous amount of time on bar leadership activities.

On this very day 151 years ago, lawyers came together to create an organization dedicated to professional excellence, public service, and the administration of justice. Those values remain as relevant today as they were then.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of that journey. And thank you for the privilege of serving as your president. 

News&Events

The Art of Connection: YLS Brings Young Lawyers Together for a Night of Reflection and Fun

On May 21, members of the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA)'s Young Lawyers Section (YLS), along with law students, family members, and friends, gathered at the New Britain Museum of American Art for The Art of Connection: YLS Scavenger Social.

The event served as an opportunity to celebrate a successful year for the Young Lawyers Section while also recognizing the contributions of its members throughout the Connecticut Bar Association's history. Photos of influential past YLS chairs ranging from the section's founding in 1947 to today were on display at the event. Attendees enjoyed an evening of networking, reflection, and camaraderie in the museum's inspiring setting and participated in a museum-wide scavenger hunt. The interactive activity provided a fun and engaging way for attendees to build relationships while enjoying one of Connecticut's premier cultural institutions.

"The Young Lawyers Section is built on the connections we make with one another, and this event was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate those relationships while reflecting on a successful year," said YLS Chair Paige M. Vaillancourt. "As the Connecticut



(L to R) YLS Secretary Olivia Benson, YLS Chair Paige M. Vaillancourt, YLS Chair-Elect Sara Bonaiuto, YLS Treasurer Jermaine A. Brookshire, Jr.

Bar Association closes out its 150th anniversary, it was especially meaningful to gather together to recognize the contributions of young lawyers through the years and look ahead to the future of our profession together." n

CBA Members Hit the Dancefloor at Line Dancing for Lawyers Event

On April 30, 2026, members of the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) gathered for the unique networking event, Line Dancing for Lawyers. Held at the Ebony Horsewomen Inc. Equestrian and Therapeutic Center in Hartford, the event invited legal professionals and law students of all experience levels to take a break from their daily routines and participate in a line

dancing lesson. With guided instruction provided, even first-time dancers were able to participate comfortably. The informal format helped new and seasoned CBA members connect with one another, unwind, and try something new, highlighting the CBA's continued commitment to creating engaging and inclusive community-driven experiences.



Attendees at the event received guided line dancing instructions.

Prioritizing Wellness: 2026 Well-Being Summit Equips Attorneys to Thrive

The Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) welcomed members of the legal community to the 2026 Well-Being Summit at its offices in Meriden on May 6 for a morning dedicated to mindfulness, wellness, and self-healing. Hosted by the CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee, the annual event provided attorneys with practical strategies and resources designed to support healthier and more balanced professional and personal lives.

This year's summit featured retreat leaders from Wellness Insights Integrative Medicine, who guided attendees through presentations and experiential activities centered on improving physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The program opened with a centering session led by Dr. Katie Takayasu, founder of Wellness Insights and a board-certified family medicine physician and integrative medicine expert who specializes in whole-person care and root-cause healing. "Our job here today is to give you some really big pearls of wisdom, so that when you go back into your everyday life you can incorporate some of them," stated Dr. Takayasu.

Throughout the day, attendees explored practical wellness strategies through a series of educational sessions. Dr. Takayasu presented "Sustaining Your Energy: 4 Integrative Medicine Pearls," offering insights into maintaining balance and energy through integrative medicine approaches. Dr. Becky Nardi, a Doctor of Physical Therapy specializing in orthopedic and sports-related injuries, shared guidance on ergonomics, posture, and reducing physical tension with



(L to R) Lawyer Well-Being Committee Co-Chair Sara Bonaiuto, Kathleen "KC" Cannon, Becky Nardi, CBA President Emily A. Gianquinto, Katie Takayasu, Natalie Gould, and Maria Allen.

practical tips that are easy to incorporate into daily routines.

Additional presentations included "Staying Healthy: How to Improve Your Immunity Naturally" by Dr. Kathleen "K.C." Cannon, a naturopathic physician trained in functional medicine, and "Why Can't I Stick to My Health Goals" by Natalie Gould, a national board certified health and wellness coach who works with clients to build sustainable lifestyle changes rooted in whole-person wellness.

Following lunch, attendees participated in a recovery meditation session led by licensed massage therapist and patient navigator Maria Allen. The session focused on mindfulness and meditation techniques designed to help attorneys reset and recharge throughout the workday.

PEERS AND CHEERS

Bacon Wilson, P.C. is pleased to announce that Morgan Harrington joined the firm as an associate attorney in the firm's Commercial Real Estate Department. She will primarily work out of Bacon Wilson's Springfield office, focusing on commercial and corporate real estate and business transactions.

The Walter Camp Football Foundation has announced that Robert L. Berchem is a recipient of the 2026 Walter Camp Champion of Community Award, which recognizes individuals who have achieved distinction in business, public service, or private life while making meaningful

contributions to their communities and charitable causes.

Cummings & Lockwood LLC is pleased to announce that Margaret (Meg) A. Deluca will succeed Heather J. Rhoades as the chair of the firm's Private Clients Group. Based in the Stamford office, Attorney Deluca joined the firm in 1996 and concentrates her legal practice in the areas of estate planning, business succession planning, estate and trust administration, and probate litigation.

Jackson Lewis's Hartford-based principal Rick Vitarelli, a construction and real

estate labor leader, has been tapped to chair the Associated General Contractors of America Labor and Employment Law Council.

Ogletree Deakins is proud to announce that John Stretton has been elected as a fellow in the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers Class of 2026. This recognition is reserved for lawyers who have spent decades contributing to and shaping labor and employment law. Attorney Stretton will be recognized at the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers' formal induction ceremony this November.

News&Events

CBA Celebrates Law Day 2026

The Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) Civics Education Committee held its annual Law Day Ceremony at the Connecticut Appellate Court on May 7. Law Day is a national celebration held annually to recognize the importance of the rule of law and to encourage a deeper understanding of the legal profession and civic engagement. This year's Law Day theme, selected by the American Bar Association, was "The Rule of Law and the American Dream."

Connecticut Appellate Court Judge Bethany J. Alvord welcomed attendees to the event and opened the ceremony before CBA President Emily A. Gianquinto delivered remarks reflecting on the significance of Law Day and this year's theme. President Gianquinto stated, "The rule of law means that everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from, must be treated fairly under the same laws. The American Dream is the idea that anyone can build a good life in America through hard work, no matter who they are and no matter where they came from. So those two ideas are closely connected. Without the rule of law, the American dream is not possible for everyone." Following President Gianquinto's remarks, Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas also greeted the attendees and emphasized the importance of maintaining civic engagement beyond election day.

During the event, the annual Ralph J. Monaco Memorial Civics Education Awards were presented by Dina Monaco to Connecticut high school students who

demonstrated a significant commitment to advancing civic engagement, civics education, and the rule of law. The awards were established in memory of past CBA President Ralph J. Monaco, whose leadership and dedication to civics education left a lasting impact on Connecticut's legal community.

This year's Ralph J. Monaco Memorial Civics Education Award recipients included:

- Xander Bauer, Staples High School
- Faustine Canales Arrieta, Norwich Free Academy
- Elijah Falkenstein, Staples High School
- Mariz Gollayan, Nathan Hale-Ray High School
- Meredith Sullivan, Wilton High School
- Iryna Vasylykiv, Classical Magnet School

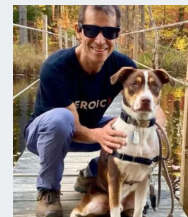
Following the presentation of the awards, John R. Weikart, chair of the CBA Civics Education Committee, introduced the student program portion of the event, which consisted of middle school and high school students from Hartford Classical Magnet School presenting to the Appellate Court judges on concepts related to the idea of the American dream.

This year's event was also dedicated to the memory of retired Superior Court Judge John D. Boland, who passed away in October 2025. Judge Boland is remembered for his deep commitment to civics education, the rule of law, and public service, as well as for the important role

he played in the success of previous Law Day programs.

Thank you to all of the students, teachers, volunteers, judges, attorneys, and community members who participated in this year's Law Day celebration and congratulations to the recipients of the 2026 Ralph J. Monaco Memorial Civics Education Awards.

IN MEMORIAM



Michael Joseph Keenan (1972-2026) was born in Poughkeepsie, New York and attended Binghamton University and Quinnipiac University School

of Law. He and his wife Amy Sinclair worked side by side building Keenan Law in South Glastonbury, where Amy served as the firm's administrator. He spent nearly three decades helping families navigate estate planning, elder law, probate, and special needs planning. Attorney Keenan also served as president of the Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce, reflecting his commitment to the community he loved.



John Michael Andreini (1949-2026) graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1971. He was commissioned an officer

in the Field Artillery serving initially at Fort Sill, Oklahoma and Fort Lewis, Washington before serving in the Republic of Korea as a platoon leader and operations officer for an Air Assault Helicopter Company. After leaving the Army in 1976, Attorney Andreini attended University of Connecticut Law School where he was the president of the Student Bar Association and a Law School Foundation Prize award winner. Over the course of his legal career, he worked for the Legal Aid Society of Hartford County as well as Fazzano and Dubay and later started his own firm in 2000.



(From L to R) Monaco Award Winners Iryna Vasylykiv, Zander Bauer, and Elijah Falkenstein; Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas; and Monaco Award Winners Meredith Sullivan, Faustine Canales Arrieta, and Mariz Gollayan

CBA Hosts Ralph J. Monaco Memorial Civics Education Fund Fundraiser

On May 19, members of the CBA gathered at The Truck Bar in Berlin for a fundraiser hosted by the Connecticut Bar Association's Civics Education Committee to support the Ralph J. Monaco Memorial Civics Education Fund (Monaco Memorial Fund). Through ticket sales and support from sponsors, over \$8,000 was raised to support the Monaco Memorial Fund. Attendees enjoyed food, drinks, and a variety of games ranging from cornhole, yard pong, and ladder toss to arcade games, pool, and shuffleboard.

The Monaco Memorial Fund is named in honor of the CBA's 87th president, Ralph J. Monaco, who passed away in 2021. Attorney Monaco was a champion of civics education and the purpose of the fund is to provide monetary grants that accompany the Ralph J. Monaco Memorial Civics Education Awards (Monaco Civics Awards), which are presented annually at the CBA's Law Day Celebration to Connecticut high school students who demonstrate a significant commitment to advancing civic engagement, civics education, and the rule of law.

At the fundraiser, CBA Past President Daniel J. Horgan emphasized the growth of the fund over the past five years, which has led to the presentation of numerous awards and grants to Connecticut high school students. He concluded by leading a toast to Ralph J. Monaco, noting, "Ralph would want all of us to continue what we're doing, which is loving our families, doing the best we can at our jobs, taking care of our kids, and living every day to the fullest and we're going to continue to do that."

Thank you to Anderson Trial Lawyers, Conway Londregan Sheehan & Monaco PC, Faulkner & Graves, Horgan Law Offices, Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck & Scott D. Camassar, Norte Immigration Law, Polito & Harrington LLC, and Shipman & Goodwin for sponsoring the fundraiser.



CBA members gathered at the Truck Bar in Berlin for a fundraiser supporting the Ralph J. Monaco Memorial Civics Education Fund..

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A New Chapter Begins: New Attorneys Sworn into the Connecticut Bar

During a ceremony held on May 29, a group of 23 new attorneys were sworn into the Connecticut Bar inside the Connecticut Supreme Court chambers. Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice Raheem L. Mullins and Associate Justices Joan K. Alexander; William H. Bright, Jr.; Nora R. Dannehy; Gregory T. D'Auria; and Steven D. Ecker presided over the ceremony.

Chief Justice Mullins provided the ceremonies' welcome remarks before Associate Justice William H. Bright, Jr. gave a speech recognizing and congratulating the new admittees on their notable achievement. During his speech, Justice Bright addressed the new admittees and encouraged them to pursue pro bono work. Emphasizing the personal rewards of pro bono service, he noted, "You will

have the opportunity to have a direct and meaningful impact on the life of a person who is facing immense personal strife."

After the motion to admit the successful candidates to the bar, Associate Justice Gregory T. D'Auria administered the Oath of Attorney to the new admittees, and Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Clerk Carl Cicchetti administered the Oath of Commissioner of Superior Court. Then each inductee individually presented themselves as attorneys before the court. During the final portion of the ceremony CBA President Emily A. Gianquinto presented a welcome speech to the new attorneys. During her speech she highlighted the importance of civility, stating, "In a world that increasingly rewards rage over understanding, your ability to remain civil, to remain calm, and to be

respectful and solution focused will be what distinguishes you."

Following the admission of the new attorneys, all the event's attendees were invited to a reception held in the Museum of Connecticut History, where they were able to meet with representatives from the Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section (YLS) and other bar associations from across Connecticut.

The newly inducted attorneys were also invited to attend an evening new admittee reception held by the CBA at Gouveia Vineyard in Wallingford on June 11. Those who joined the reception were able to meet with CBA and YLS leaders and network with fellow new admittees while enjoying wine and refreshments at the vineyard.



The ceremony's inductees took the Oath of Attorney and the Oath of Commissioner of Superior Court.



Justices of the Connecticut Supreme Court.



A reception was held in the Museum of Connecticut History after the ceremony.



New admittees met and mingled with bar associations from throughout Connecticut.



(L to R) Jaeden C. Spitale, Jeffrey M. Beck, CBA President Emily A. Gianquinto, and Aimee E. Sportini



YLS Chair-Elect Sara Bonaiuto (second from left), YLS Chair Paige M. Vaillancourt (third from left), CBA President-Elect J. Paul Vance, Jr. (fourth from left), CBA Vice President Rowena A. Moffett (fourth from right) and the newly admitted attorneys met during the reception held at Gouveia Vineyards in Wallingford



Congratulations to the Newest Admittees to the Connecticut Bar

Yasmin Donna Abdel-Hack
 Adrianna Rose Aresco
 Jasmine Bartholomew
 Teresa Marie Basile
 Renee Bingling
 Anatolii Blyzniuchenko
 Leo Augustus Bolock
 Meghan Catherine Bonnist
 Donlaporn Bosso
 Robert Gilbert Caffary III
 Joy Arnice Hamer
 Christine Janis
 Abdul-Manan Mahama
 Amanda Marie McKenzie
 Karen McLaughlin-Curcio
 Hope Marie Modugno
 Anna Nowak
 Maggie Lynn Burch Shumar
 Oleksandra Skliar
 Taylor Spalding
 Megan Nicole Stoner
 Sabrina Olivia Strom
 Basil Clark Utter



Attendees had the opportunity to meet and mingle with fellow new admittees as well as long-time CBA members

YLS Connects with Law Students at Speed Networking Event

The Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section (YLS) hosted a speed networking event at Kinsmen Brewing in Milldale on April 1, bringing together a group of young attorneys and law students from across the state.

The event welcomed students from Quinnipiac University, University of Connecticut, and Western New England Schools of Law. The structured speed networking format gave attendees the opportunity to engage in a series of brief, focused conversations designed to foster meaningful professional relationships.

"This speed networking event reflects what the Young Lawyers Section is all about, creating meaningful opportunities for connection, mentorship, and growth," stated YLS Law School Outreach Director Kyle A. Bechet. "By bringing together law students and practicing attorneys in a welcoming, struc-

tured environment, we're helping to build relationships that can shape careers and strengthen the future of our profession."

The evening began with informal networking over food and drinks, followed by the timed networking sessions, and concluded with additional opportunities for attendees to continue conversations and build connections. This event is part of the Young Lawyers Section's broader mission to support professional development, encourage collaboration, and ease the transition from law school



Event attendees gathered for networking

to legal practice. By facilitating direct interaction between students and practicing attorneys, the event served as a valuable bridge between education and the profession.



TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP IN LEADERSHIP

Become a CBA Presidential Fellow

The CBA Presidential Fellows Program is geared toward increasing the active involvement of early- and mid-career lawyers in the leadership and activities of CBA sections.

Presidential Fellows:

- Are matched with a CBA section aligned with their interests and experience and invited to serve on its executive committee
- Get involved in or lead a key section project
- Are invited to educational and leadership development events at no charge



ctbar.org/Fellows

Apply by Friday, August 14



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who deserves the
spotlight?*

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nomination
today at**

ctbar.org/awards

by August 31



Nominate a Colleague Who's Made a Difference

From public service and pro bono work to legal education and community impact, the CBA Awards honor those who go above and beyond.

Charles J. Parker Legal Services Award is presented to a CBA member who has a deep and abiding interest in and dedication to the delivery of legal services to the disadvantaged in Connecticut.

Citizen for the Law Award is presented to a person who is not employed in the legal area but has made a significant contribution to the institution of justice and the law on a voluntary basis.

Citizen of the Law Award is presented to a CBA member who has made a significant contribution to a charitable or public service cause that does not involve professional legal skills.

Distinguished Public Service Award is given to a Connecticut resident, or a person with a meaningful relationship to Connecticut, who has made a significant contribution to society and is distinguished in his or her profession.

Henry J. Naruk Judiciary Award is presented to members of the state and federal judiciary who have made substantial contributions to the administration of justice in Connecticut.

John Eldred Shields Distinguished Professional Service Award is presented to a CBA member who has performed outstanding service through or on behalf of the CBA, for the benefit of the legal community and the community at large.

Tapping Reeve Legal Educator Award is presented to a CBA member who is a faculty member or instructor at one of Connecticut's Law Schools or Western New England School of Law who has made a significant contribution to the cause of legal education in the state.

The Honorable Anthony V. DeMayo Pro Bono Award is presented to CBA members who are not salaried employees of a legal aid or similar nonprofit organization that have demonstrated dedication to the provision of legal services without expectation of payment to those in need.

Connecticut's Legal Community Comes Together at the 2026 Connecticut Legal Conference

More than 850 attorneys, judges, law students, paralegals, and other legal professionals gathered at the Connecticut Convention Center on June 2 for the 2026 Connecticut Legal Conference (CLC), making it the most highly attended CLC of the 2020s.

From thought-provoking discussions on constitutional law and the future of the judiciary to practical guidance on artificial intelligence (AI) and law practice management, the conference offered a full day of learning and networking for legal professionals at every stage of their careers.

A Day Designed for the Entire Legal Profession

The conference featured 36 continuing legal education (CLE) programs spanning a wide range of practice

areas and professional interests. Whether attendees were solo practitioners looking to grow their firms, litigators seeking updates on recent case law, or newer attorneys exploring emerging technologies, the day offered opportunities to gain practical insights and earn CLE credit.

The four seminars from the President's Track were also livestreamed, extending the conference's reach beyond Hartford and allowing remote participants to engage with key sessions.

The day began with a networking breakfast as well as alumni gatherings for graduates of Quinnipiac University School of Law, the University of Connecticut School of Law, and Seton Hall University School of Law, which provided an opportunity for

former classmates to reconnect and build professional connections before programming began.

The exhibitor showcase, where attendees connected with colleagues, explored products and services from 40 legal industry vendors, and took advantage of complimentary professional headshots, remained a hub of activity throughout the day.

Examining the Separation of Powers in a Changing Era

One of the conference's highlights was a featured presentation by Dean Erwin Chemerinsky of Berkeley Law, one of the nation's most widely recognized constitutional scholars. His seminar, "The Evolution of Separation of Powers in the United States," was moderated by retired Connecticut Supreme Court Justice Joette Katz and then CBA President-Elect J. Paul Vance, Jr. In the seminar, Dean Chemerinsky explored the general understanding of the separation of powers as described in Articles I, II, and III of the Constitution of the United States and provided attendees with an overview of how the interpretation of the separation of powers has changed to date, addressing modern developments such as the expansion of the unitary executive theory.

The conversation continued in a featured panel discussion, "SCOTUS, Separation of Powers, Elections, and the Rule of Law." Justice Steven D. Ecker of the Connecticut Supreme Court joined Brennan Center Voting Rights and Elections Program Director Sean Morales-Doyle and Yale Law



The conference's featured national speaker, Berkeley School of Law Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, presented the seminar "The Evolution of Separation of Powers in the United States."

Image credit: Happy_vector/Getty Images

School Professor Michael J. Wishnie for a wide-ranging discussion of recent Supreme Court decisions and developments affecting elections, governance, and the rule of law. Moderated by Justice Katz, the panel provided attendees with timely perspectives on issues shaping legal discourse nationwide.

Practical Insights for Modern Practice

Beyond the featured sessions, conference programming reflected a diverse range of current topics as well as annual reviews of case law and legislation in several practice areas.

Attendees interested in emerging technologies explored “Building Your AI Toolkit: Navigating AI, Evaluating Options, and Choosing the Right Tools,” which provided an overview of what AI is and explored common tools, use cases for AI, and the potential risks and benefits it presents.

For those considering entrepreneurship, “How to Start a Solo Law Practice” offered personal lessons and real-world insights into the challenges and benefits of striking out on your own as a solo practitioner from experienced practitioners.



Comedian Juston McKinney performed during the CBA Annual Meeting and Luncheon.



(L to R) The 2026-2027 CBA Officers: Immediate Past President Emily A. Gianquinto; Treasurer Kyle J. LaBuff; Secretary Cindy M. Cieslak; President J. Paul Vance, Jr.; Vice President Sharad A. Samy; and President-Elect Rowena A. Moffett (not pictured: Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Paige M. Vaillancourt)

Celebrating Leadership and Looking Ahead

At midday, attendees gathered in the convention center ballroom for the CBA Annual Meeting and Luncheon, a long-standing conference tradition that combines organizational business with an opportunity to celebrate the association's leadership.

During the luncheon, outgoing CBA President Emily A. Gianquinto formally installed the 2026-2027 CBA Executive Committee:

- President, J. Paul Vance Jr.
- President-Elect, Rowena A. Moffett

- Vice President, Sharad A. Samy
- Secretary, Cindy M. Cieslak
- Treasurer, Kyle J. LaBuff
- Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, Paige M. Vaillancourt

Gianquinto will continue to serve on the Executive Committee as Immediate Past President.

Following the ceremonial passing of the gavel, President Vance outlined his vision for the coming bar year: “The rule of law is not self-executing. Justice does not simply happen. What we have—our courts, our rights, our institutions, our system of ordered liberty—exists because generations



Jonathan Weiner, Hon. Matthew J. Budzik, Claire M. Howard, and Danielle L. McGee speaking at “Understanding FOIC Decision-making & the Right of Appeal from a FOIC Decision under the UAPA”

Connecticut Legal Conference

of lawyers, judges, and public servants have built it. Carefully. Deliberately. And, at times, under tremendous pressure,” stated Vance. “That is why I have chosen as the theme for this bar year: Built on Justice. It reflects both who we are and what is expected of us.”

After concluding his remarks, Vance welcomed renowned New England comedian Juston McKinney to the stage for a special performance, which provided a lighthearted break before attendees headed back to their afternoon CLE sessions.

Ending the Day in Celebration

Following final sessions of CLE programming, attendees gathered for the President’s Reception to conclude the conference. Against the backdrop of live music from the Infinity Saxophone Quartet, attendees had refreshments and appetizers, reconnected with colleagues, and enjoyed a live performance by the Infinity Saxophone Quartet before heading home. n



Conference attendees could choose from a selection of 36 continuing legal education seminars throughout the day.



Attendees had the opportunity to explore legal businesses and services to help their practice.



Entertainment was provided by Infinity Saxophone Quartet at the President’s Reception.



The President's Reception allowed attendees to connect, converse, and unwind after a full day of education seminars.



Jonathan M. Shapiro, Hon. Vernon D. Oliver, and Andy L. Core speaking at "Claude Is Not the Name of Your Lawyer": AI, Privilege, and the New Rules of the Game."

2026-2027 President J. Paul Vance, Jr. Annual Meeting Speech

Good afternoon, colleagues, friends, and honored guests.

It is a profound privilege to stand before you today as President of the Connecticut Bar Association. I am deeply grateful for your trust, and mindful of the responsibility that comes with it.

When I think about this profession—about what it is, and what it requires of us—I keep coming back to a simple idea:

We are part of something that is built.

The law is often described in technical terms—statutes, precedents, and procedures—but at its core, it is something far more fundamental. The law is the fabric that holds our society together. It is the quiet agreement that disputes will be resolved not by force, but by reason. That rights will be protected not by power, but by principle. And that justice, while imperfect, will always remain within reach.

But none of that happens on its own.

The rule of law is not self-executing. Justice does not simply happen. What we have—our courts, our rights, our institutions, our system of ordered liberty—exists because generations of lawyers, judges, and public servants have built it. Carefully. Deliberately. And, at



times, under tremendous pressure.

And now, it is our turn.

That is why I have chosen as the theme for this bar year: Built on Justice.

It reflects both who we are and what is expected of us.

For me, that understanding began long before I ever stepped into a courtroom.

As a child, I would watch my father pre-

pare for his day as a Connecticut State Trooper. There was a ritual to it. The uniform was never simply put on—it was assembled with care. Shoes shined until they reflected the light. Badge polished until it caught it. Every detail mattered. Not for appearance, but because of what it represented: discipline, service, and respect for the role he carried.

At the time, I didn't have the words for it. But I understood that what he was putting on each day was not just a uniform—it was a commitment to the rule of law.

Connecticut Legal Conference

That image has stayed with me throughout my career.

It reminds me of Seamus Heaney's poem *Digging*, where he reflects on his father and grandfather working the land with a spade, then looks at his own hand holding a pen. He recognizes that while his tools are different, the work carries the same dignity, the same responsibility, and the same connection to those who came before him.

Like Heaney, we do our work with different tools. Not with a spade, and not with a badge—but with words. With arguments. With judgment.

But the principle is the same.

Each of us is engaged in the work of building.

We build trust between citizens and institutions. We build confidence in our courts. We build solutions for clients navigating some of the most difficult moments of their lives. And through our daily work—case by case, client by client, decision by decision—we help shape whether our legal system lives up to its promise. A system built on justice requires a strong foundation.

It depends on integrity, professionalism, civility, and respect for the rule of law. These are not abstract ideals. These are the load-bearing pillars of everything we do.

And that work has never been more important.

We practice in a time when institutions are questioned, expertise is challenged, and the pace of change often outstrips our ability to fully absorb it. New technologies are transforming how we communicate, how we work, and even how legal services are delivered.

In that environment, the role of a

lawyer becomes even more essential.

We are not merely technicians of the law.

We are stewards of it.

That stewardship carries obligations. To be candid when candor is difficult. To be civil when civility feels strained. To be ethical when no one is watching. And

CONNECTICUT LEGAL CONFERENCE



*Connecticut
Bar Association*

to remember that our duty is not only to our clients, but also to the system that gives meaning to our work.

Here in Connecticut, we are fortunate to inherit a legal tradition marked by professionalism, collegiality, and a deep respect for the institutions we serve.

But we also face real challenges.

Access to justice remains out of reach for too many. The cost of legal services can be prohibitive. Our profession must continue to evolve, welcoming new and diverse voices, embracing innovation, and preparing the next generation not merely to practice law, but to lead.

I intend to meet these challenges with both realism and optimism.

We will continue expanding ac-

cess to justice, because the rule of law has little meaning if it is beyond reach. We will support lawyers at every stage of their careers. We will modernize where modernization is needed. And we will engage thoughtfully with the opportunities and risks presented by emerging technologies.

But just as importantly, we will continue to strengthen the foundation upon which this profession stands.

Integrity. Professionalism. Service.

Like my father's uniform, these values are not symbolic. They are lived. They are reflected in the details—how we treat one another, how we conduct ourselves, and how seriously we take the responsibilities entrusted to us. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the people who make this work possible at home—my wife, Michele, and my sons, Trey and Liam and my law partners. Your support, patience, and perspective mean more than I can adequately express.

We inherit a proud tradition. But our responsibility is not simply to preserve it.

Our responsibility is to build upon it.

To leave this profession stronger than we found it. To ensure that what comes next is every bit as durable and worthy as what we inherited. And to continue building a legal system that earns and deserves the public's trust.

Because if the law is the fabric that holds our society together, then each of us holds a thread.

And if our profession is built on justice, then each of us is a builder.

Thank you for the work you do. And thank you for joining in the important work of building what comes next. n

Introducing

New CBA Member Benefit:

Health & Welfare Fund Medical Plan for Connecticut Bar Association Members



For many attorneys, securing health insurance can be one of the most challenging aspects of practicing law independently. While attorneys employed by larger firms or organizations often have access to employer-sponsored health plans, solo practitioners, independent contractors, and attorneys in small firms frequently must navigate the health insurance marketplace on their own.

To help address this need, the Connecticut Bar Association is pleased to offer a valuable new benefit available exclusively to members: Health & Welfare Fund Medical Plan for Connecticut Bar Association Members. This program is designed to help CBA members access health insurance options that fit their personal, family, and professional needs. Whether you are launching a solo practice, transitioning from a larger firm, working as an independent attorney, or simply exploring alternatives to your current coverage, this benefit provides access to resources that can make the process easier. Members can connect with experienced insurance professionals who understand the unique circumstances of attorneys and can help identify coverage options that align with individual needs and budgets.

The plan utilizes the Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield BlueCard nationwide provider network and includes seven coverage options, giving members the ability to select a plan based on their individual healthcare needs and financial priorities. Unlike many individual policies, the program does not require medical underwriting.

The Connecticut Bar Association is committed to helping members succeed in every aspect of their careers. While professional development and legal education remain core components of membership, practical business resources are equally important.

Access to health insurance is a key part of maintaining financial stability and personal wellness. By insurance solutions, the CBA is helping members address a critical need while providing another example of the tangible value available through membership.

Visit ctbar.org/HealthInsurance to review available options and connect with a program representative.

CBA Solo Health Insurance at a Glance

Eligible CBA Members

- Solo practitioners
- Individual attorneys
- Small firm owners and attorneys
- Attorneys without employer-sponsored coverage
- Paralegals

What the Benefit Offers

- Access to individual health insurance options
- Assistance comparing plans and coverage choices
- Support throughout the enrollment process

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2026-2027 CBA Officers

The 2026-2027 CBA Officers were installed at the CBA Annual Meeting, which was held during the Connecticut Legal Conference on June 2. These officers will lead the CBA for the current bar year and took office on July 1.

President



J. Paul Vance, Jr. is a partner at Logan Vance Sullivan & Kores LLP where he focuses his practice on plaintiff's personal injury, workers' compensation, and medical malpractice. He formerly served as the State of Connecticut Claims Commissioner and has served in both elected and appointed positions in local government.

President-Elect



Rowena A. Moffett is co-managing partner of Brenner Saltzman & Wallman LLP. Attorney Moffett graduated with high honors from the University of Connecticut Law School and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After her clerkships with U.S. District Judge Dominic Squatrito and U.S. Magistrate Judge Thomas Smith, she joined Brenner, Saltzman & Wallman LLP in 2000 and became a principal in 2005.

Vice President



Sharad A. Samy is the General Counsel of The Common Fund for Nonprofit Organizations and is also a solo practitioner at The Law Offices of Sharad A. Samy LLC in Fairfield. He has over 28 years of transactional and litigation experience, has served as a partner of an international law firm and has been a military attorney in the US Army Reserve and the Connecticut Army National Guard.

Secretary



Cindy M. Cieslak is a partner at Rose Kallor, LLP in Hartford. She counsels both private and public sector clients on all aspects of labor and employment law, including labor disputes and litigation in courts and administrative agencies. She is an Association of Workplace Investigators Certificate Holder (AWI-CH) and regularly conducts workplace and Title IX investigations. Her experience also includes public sector counseling for municipalities and public agencies.

Treasurer



Kyle J. LaBuff is an Assistant State's Attorney for the Division of Criminal Justice. He has previously practiced real estate law and criminal defense work. He received his B.S. from Rochester Institute of Technology. He will also be Treasurer of the Greater Bridgeport Bar Association.

Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

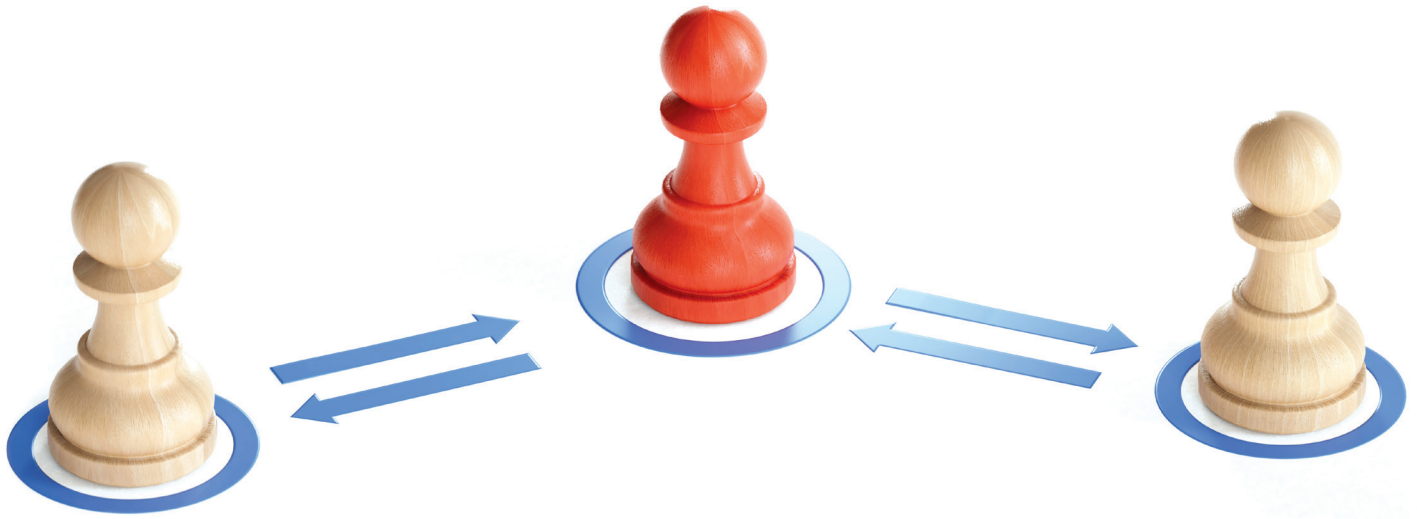


Paige M. Vaillancourt is a partner at Rescia Vaillancourt, P.C. with offices in Connecticut and Massachusetts and an adjunct professor at Western New England University School of Law. Her practice involves a variety of bankruptcy matters, including debtor and creditor representation, workouts, and trustee litigation, as well as small business representation.

Immediate Past President



Emily A. Gianquinto is special counsel at McCarter & English LLP, where she counsels employers on day-to-day employment matters and represents them before federal and state courts, administrative agencies, and mediation and arbitration panels. Her experience includes litigating all manner of business disputes.



Arbitration: A True Litigation Alternative

By ROY L. DE BARBIERI and ROBERT HARRIS

Before the Federal Arbitration Act was adopted in 1925, courts often refused to enforce agreements requiring parties to arbitrate future disputes. Judges frequently viewed arbitration provisions as improper attempts to bypass judicial authority. Even if parties contractually had agreed to arbitrate, the agreement might be ignored once a dispute reached the courthouse. The FAA changed that. Arbitration agreements became enforceable. Parties who agreed in advance to resolve disputes privately could rely on courts to honor that decision. Institutions administering arbitrations shortly followed: the American Arbitration Association was founded in 1926.

Yet arbitration itself did not begin in 1925.

Long before arbitration legislation and institutions existed, businesspeople were resolving disputes outside the courts in a simpler way: they chose someone they trusted and asked that person to decide. No rules. No institution. No clause required. Just two parties, a disagreement, and a neutral they could agree on. As an example, two parties in the fish business had a dispute about whether a fisherman was obligated to sell his daily catch exclusively to a particular market customer. The issue mattered—but the real challenge was timing. Mackerel doesn't age well. So, the parties did something practical: they asked someone they both trusted to decide the issue on the spot. Time is sometimes everything and arbitration is simply this: choosing a decisionmaker you trust, on a timeline that makes sense for your business.

Fast forward to today. Most business arbitrations begin the same way: with a clause drafted months or years before the dispute, at

a time when the parties are focused on doing business together, not on conflict. What happens far less often is the reverse. Two businesses find themselves in an active dispute. The contract contains no arbitration clause. Litigation looms—or has already begun. And yet, despite the absence of any contractual obligation, the parties voluntarily agree to arbitrate. Or not. Why is that scenario so rare?

Several factors contribute to the rarity of arbitration agreements reached after a dispute has begun.

Not Everyone Likes Arbitration

Some lawyers worry about limited appellate review. Others are concerned about inconsistent outcomes or unfamiliar procedures. Many attorneys are simply more comfortable with the structure and predictability of court litigation. These concerns are understandable. Arbitration is not a perfect process, and it is not appropriate for every dispute. But skepticism alone does not explain why arbitration is almost never discussed once litigation becomes the presumptive path.

It Takes Two to Tango

Absent a pre-dispute agreement, arbitration after litigation commences requires mutual consent. One party's enthusiasm is meaningless without the other's. And if a party believes it has an advantage in court—procedural leverage, discovery pressure, delay—there is little incentive to give that up voluntarily. Though rational, it may sometimes be shortsighted.

The Dominant Reason: No One Asks

The most common reason post-dispute arbitration does not happen is simpler and more human: nobody suggests it. A dispute arises. Counsel are retained. Pleadings are drafted. Litigation begins. Arbitration never enters the conversation—not because it was considered and rejected, but because it was never considered at all. Once the litigation train leaves the station, stopping it requires someone to pause and ask a simple question: Is court really the best place to resolve this dispute?

Why Business Clients Should Consider Arbitration—Even Without a Clause

Many modern commercial disputes resemble the fisherman's problem more than lawyers realize. Capital is tied up. Operations are disrupted. Business relationships fray. Time becomes a significant cost. When lawyers and their clients pause to ask whether arbitration makes sense, several realizations may emerge:

Speed Often Matters Most

Business clients may talk about vindication, principle, or leverage. But what they often need most is resolution. Arbitration can compress timelines dramatically. Hearings are scheduled when the parties and arbitrator are available—not when the court's calendar allows. Discovery is streamlined. Motion practice is limited. Finality arrives in months, not years. For businesses operating in real time, that difference can be decisive and exceedingly valuable.

Expertise Is Not Random

In litigation, judges are assigned randomly. You might draw someone with deep familiarity with the relevant industry or issues. Or you might not. Arbitration allows the parties to choose a decision-maker with appropriate expertise. Less time is needed to educate the arbitrator about industry practices. More time is devoted to what actually matters.

Discovery Can Be Right-Sized

One of arbitration's often critiqued features—limited discovery—is often one of its greatest strengths. Litigation discovery can spiral out of control, consuming more time and money than the dispute warrants. Depositions multiply. Document requests grow broader. Motion practice follows. Arbitration discovery can be tailored to the needs of the case. When counsel articulate legitimate needs, discovery is usually permitted. What disappears is not fairness, but excess, leaving discovery that is sufficient, focused, and less expensive.

Privacy Has Real Value

State sponsored Court proceedings are public by default. Arbitration is not; journalists and the public cannot walk into an arbi-

tration hearing. For closely held companies, partnerships, family businesses, and organizations concerned about reputational risk, privacy can be extremely important. Financial information, internal disputes, and proprietary data can remain private within the arbitration process.

Finality Can Be a Feature, Not a Flaw

Limited appellate review is frequently cited as a drawback of arbitration. But in many commercial disputes the possibility of appeal is more theoretical than practical.

Appeals are expensive. They are slow, and they fail more often than not. As a tradeoff, arbitration offers a focused decision from a neutral with subject matter expertise that allows parties to move on. And if the stakes are high enough, the parties can effectively front-load an appeal by agreeing to have three arbitrators with relevant expertise decide the dispute. For parties who want closure—to put the dispute behind them—finality is a feature, not a drawback.

When Arbitration Makes Particular Sense

Post-dispute arbitration is not appropriate for every case. But certain circumstances make it particularly attractive:

- disputes involving time-sensitive business decisions
- cases benefiting from specialized industry expertise
- situations where confidentiality is important
- disputes where litigation costs may be excessive
- matters where the parties want a decision, not a war of attrition

When these factors align, arbitration deserves serious consideration—even after litigation has begun. All it takes is an attorney wise and confident enough to ask their adversary: "How do you feel about arbitration?"

A few practical points you shouldn't skip over:

- Decide whether you want a stay vs. dismissal—a stay is safer if you're worried about enforcement or the other side backing out
- Be careful with cost allocation—will the parties bear their own costs, or will the arbitrator be empowered to allocate costs based upon who prevails.
- Think about discovery limits—too restrictive can hurt you, too broad defeats the purpose.
- Consider adding a mediation step before arbitration if you think settlement is realistic.

Atty. Roy L. De Barbieri is Of Counsel to the Firm of Zangari Cohn Cuthbertson Duhl & Grello P.C. with offices in New Haven and Hartford. Roy is a distinguished dispute resolution neutral, and continues to perform his independent services as an arbitrator and mediator throughout Connecticut and across the country. Robert Harris, the founder of Positively Neutral LLC, serves as a full-time arbitrator and mediator of complex commercial and employment disputes, especially those involving business owners, executives, investors and lenders.

While those considering submitting a dispute to arbitration should craft their agreement with counsel based upon the applicable circumstances, here are a few thoughts as a starting point:

ARBITRATION AGREEMENT

This Arbitration Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into on [Date], by and between:

Defendant: [Your Full Name and Address]

Plaintiff: [Opposing Party Full Name and Address]

Collectively referred to as the "Parties."

1. PURPOSE

The Parties agree to resolve all disputes arising out of or related to the civil litigation currently pending in [Court Name, Case Number] (the "Dispute") through binding arbitration, in lieu of continued court proceedings.

2. SCOPE OF AGREEMENT

This Agreement applies to all claims, counterclaims, defenses, and issues of any kind arising out of or relating to the Dispute, whether based in contract, tort, statute, or equity.

3. STAY OR DISMISSAL OF COURT ACTION

The Parties agree to jointly file a stipulation to:

- Stay the pending court case pending arbitration; or
- Dismiss the case without prejudice, subject to reinstatement only for enforcement of the arbitration award.

(Select one.)

4. ADMINISTRATION

- The arbitration shall be administered under the auspices of [e.g., American Arbitration Association (AAA), JAMS, or other agreed service].

5. SELECTION OF ARBITRATOR

The arbitration shall be conducted before:

- A mutually agreed-upon neutral arbitrator; or
- An arbitrator selected through [e.g., American Arbitration Association (AAA), JAMS, or other agreed service].

If the Parties cannot agree within [14] days, the arbitrator shall be appointed by [designated organization or court].

6. ARBITRATION RULES AND PROCEDURE

The arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with:

- [AAA Commercial Arbitration Rules / JAMS Rules / other agreed rules]

Modifications:

- Discovery shall be limited to [e.g., document exchange, X depositions].
- Motions practice shall be allowed at the arbitrator's discretion.
- The arbitrator shall apply the substantive law of the State of Connecticut.

7. LOCATION AND FORMAT

The arbitration shall take place in:

- [City, Connecticut], unless otherwise agreed.

Proceedings may be conducted:

- In person, remotely, or in a hybrid format, as determined by the arbitrator.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

All aspects of the arbitration, including submissions, testimony,

and the award, shall be confidential, except:

- As required by law; or
- As necessary to enforce or challenge the arbitration award.

9. COSTS AND FEES

- The arbitrator's fees and administrative costs shall be shared equally, unless otherwise awarded by the arbitrator.
- Each Party shall bear its own attorney's fees unless the arbitrator determines otherwise based on applicable law or agreement.

10. HEARING AND EVIDENCE

- The arbitrator shall allow each Party a fair opportunity to present evidence and arguments.
- The rules of evidence shall be applied flexibly.
- The arbitrator may consider written submissions in lieu of live testimony where appropriate.

11. ARBITRATION AWARD

- The arbitrator shall issue a written, reasoned decision within [30–60] days after the hearing concludes.
- The award shall be final and binding on the Parties.
- Judgment on the award may be entered in any court of competent jurisdiction.

12. LIMITED RIGHT TO APPEAL

The Parties agree that the arbitration award shall be final, with only limited judicial review as permitted under applicable law (e.g., fraud, arbitrator misconduct, or manifest disregard of the law).

13. SETTLEMENT AUTHORITY

Each Party represents that they have full authority to enter into this Agreement.

14. GOOD FAITH PARTICIPATION

The Parties agree to participate in the arbitration process in good faith and to make reasonable efforts to resolve the Dispute efficiently.

15. GOVERNING LAW

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Connecticut.

16. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the Parties regarding arbitration of the Dispute and supersedes any prior discussions or agreements.

17. AMENDMENTS

This Agreement may only be amended in writing signed by both Parties.

18. SIGNATURES

Defendant:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Plaintiff:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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A Primer in Disability Law Concerning Infants and Toddlers: Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

By GABRIELA NAOMI SANDOVAL

The first one thousand days of life are a critical period for human development.¹ As a result, infants and toddlers who are developmentally delayed or have a medical condition likely to cause a developmental delay may need a specialized plan of care in order to develop certain skills so they may progress and thrive. Parents and caregivers of children with such needs may build the confidence and competence they require with the help of early intervention services available under Part C of the IDEA and through Connecticut's Birth-to-Three System.

Scientists discovered that in typically developing brains, what begin as only simple connections and circuitry, evolve to form the foundation for more complex brain pathways.² Frequent use of these connections and circuits enables them to become stronger and more efficient over time.³ These pathways are central to learning, growth, and the achievement of important developmental milestones during the early childhood years. The ability of the brain to reorganize and rewire itself in response to learning experiences and changes in the environment (plasticity) is already waning by the time a child begins kindergarten.⁴ As a result, the most pivotal time to address developmental delays and disabilities is during the ages of zero to three,⁵ before the sensory pathways for hearing, language, and higher cognitive function peak.⁶

Recognizing the importance and responsibility of identifying and assisting developmentally delayed infants, toddlers, and their families helped to establish national policy related to the development and education of very young children. In the mid-1970s, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act ("EHA"), Pub. L. No. 94-142, was passed as landmark legislation to improve educational services for school-age children with disabilities in public schools. The law required a free and appropriate public education for such children, emphasizing special education and related services designed to meet each child's unique needs.⁷

The body of law concerning infants and toddlers with a disability or developmental delay and their parents was absent until the mid-1980s. Amendments to the EHA were passed, the law was

renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Part H was introduced to include services for infants and toddlers.⁸ However, a meaningful focus on infant and toddler children did not occur until Part H was replaced by Part C. Part C was strengthened in 1997,⁹ and in 1999, implementing regulations were published. The current version of the regulations was updated in 2011, following the IDEA's 2004 reauthorization.¹⁰

As recognized by the passage of the IDEA, it is in the nation's interest for the Federal Government to support state efforts to educate children with disabilities in order to improve outcomes for families and ensure equal protection under the law.¹¹ IDEA Part C provides, in part:

Congress finds that there is an urgent and substantial need to (1) enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, minimize their potential for developmental delay, and recognize the significant brain development that occurs during the child's first three years of life; (2) reduce the educational costs to our society by minimizing the need for special education and related services after infants and toddlers with disabilities reach school age; (3) maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities to live independently in society; (4) enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities; and (5) enhance the capacity of State and local agencies and service providers to identify, evaluate, and meet the needs of all children, particularly minority, low-income, inner city, and rural children, and infants and toddlers in foster care. [Emphasis added].

It is the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance to States to (1) develop and implement a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system that provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families (2) facilitate the coordination of payment for early intervention services from Federal, State, local and private sources (including public and private insurance coverage); (3) enhance State capacity to provide quality early intervention services and expand and improve existing early intervention services being provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families; and (4) encourage



States to expand opportunities for children under three years of age who would be at risk of having substantial developmental delay if they did not receive early intervention services.¹² [Emphasis added].

Distinguished: The Fundamentals of Parts B and C of the IDEA

School-age children with a qualifying disability, diagnosis, impairment, or disturbance, ages three through twenty-one and up to twenty-two,¹³ are the focus and recipients of services under Part B of the IDEA.¹⁴ Under Part B, children are entitled to a free appropriate public education (“FAPE”) and a written Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) designed to meet their unique needs, supported by special education services that will allow them to benefit from educational instruction.¹⁵

A team of individuals is organized to identify and deliver special education services to the student. The IEP team includes: the student’s parent; not less than one of the student’s regular education teachers; one of the student’s special education teachers or someone else who provides special education services to the student; a representative of the school district who is qualified to provide or supervise special education services and is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum and also the availability of resources; an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results; other individuals with knowledge or special expertise regarding the student; and, if appropriate, the student with a disability.¹⁶

If parental consent is provided to deliver special education services pursuant to a written IEP,¹⁷ services are implemented by the student’s school district.¹⁸ Special education services identified in the IEP must be provided in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate. For example, in mainstream

classrooms with students who do not have a disability.¹⁹

Under Part C of the IDEA, infants and toddlers ages zero to three who have a developmental delay or qualifying diagnosis, and their families, are the focus and recipients of Early Intervention Services (“EIS”).²⁰ In Connecticut, the statewide system administering Part C services, the Birth-to-Three System, ensures that all infants and toddlers with a disability in need of early intervention or special education and related services are identified, located, referred, and evaluated.²¹

Certain individuals and entities, known as primary referral sources, are required to refer the parent to the Birth-to-Three System, as soon as possible and no later than seven days after identifying the child suspected of having a developmental delay (unless the primary source knows the child has already been referred).²² Primary referral sources include: (1) hospitals; (2) child health care providers; (3) local school districts; (4) public health facilities; (5) early intervention service providers; (6) participating agencies;²³ and (7) others as specified in regulation.²⁴

“Parent” means (A) a biological, adoptive or foster parent of a child; (B) a guardian, except for the Commissioner of Children and Families; (C) an individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent, including, but not limited to, a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative with whom the child lives; (D) an individual who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare; or (E) an individual appointed to be a surrogate parent. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248(8).

A multidisciplinary team of early childhood development professionals work collaboratively with the child’s parents to develop a written Individualized Family Service Plan (“IFSP”) for the child and family.²⁵

The IFSP must include a statement of the family's resources, priorities, and concerns related to enhancing the development of the child as identified through an assessment of the family and must identify the child's strengths, needs, and appropriate EIS.²⁶ EIS identified in the IFSP are family-centered and driven and must be provided to the family in "natural environments" such as the child's home and community, unless justification for an exception applies.²⁷ Prior to the provision of EIS, informed written consent by the parent must be obtained and; without jeopardizing those EIS they wish to accept, the family may decline any EIS they do not wish to receive.²⁸

Eligibility and Early Intervention Services ("EIS")

Children are eligible for Part C early intervention services if they are up to thirty-six months old or, if older, enrolled in the Birth-to-Three System; eligible or being evaluated for participation in preschool services under Part B; turn age three on or after May 1 and are enrolled in such preschool services after the their third birthday; and, are experiencing a significant delay in physical, cognitive, communication, social, emotional, or adaptive development.²⁹

Parent centric: Parents determine the EIS they wish to accept or decline. Parents learn important skills and abilities from early intervention service providers and incorporate these skills and abilities through direct interactions with their child. The State of Connecticut does not require parents to pay for any EIS listed on their IFSP.

Part C EIS may address the developmental needs and desired outcomes for the family of the infant or toddler with a disability, as identified in the written IFSP.³⁰ Certain EIS must be provided to the family entirely at public expense. These include the identification of infants and toddlers with a disability, known as "child find"; evaluation and assessment; service coordination; administrative and coordinative activities related to the development, review, and evaluation of IFSPs; and the implementation of the family's rights under the required procedural safeguards applicable to Connecticut's Birth-to-Three System.³¹

To make a referral to the CT B23 System or learn more about EIS in CT under Part C, visit www.birth23.org.

EIS may include family training, counseling and home visits; special instruction; speech-language pathology and audiology services, sign

language, and cued language services; occupational therapy; physical therapy; psychological services; service coordination services; medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes; early identification, screening, and assessment services; health services necessary to enable the infant or toddler to benefit from the other EIS; social work services; vision services; assistive technology devices and assistive technology services; and transportation and related costs that are necessary to enable an infant or toddler and family to receive another early intervention service.³²

Connecticut's Part C Birth-to-Three System

The Office of Early Childhood ("OEC") is the lead agency that administers EIS to the families of infants and toddlers with dis-

abilities through the state's Birth-to-Three ("B23") System.³³

The B23 System is implemented through independent local service providers, known as B23 Programs, that provide direct services for parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities.³⁴

The OEC monitors B23 Programs to ensure they carry out the requirements of the IDEA effectively and as required by law.³⁵ For example, the OEC monitors each B23 Program on an annual basis and reports the Office of Special Education Programs ("OSEP") and to the B23 Programs within the B23 System to confirm compliance or enforce corrective action plans as necessary for instances of noncompliance.³⁶

Under Connecticut law, each B23 eligible child and his or her family must receive: (1) a multidisciplinary assessment of the child's unique needs and the identification of services appropriate to meet such needs, (2) a written IFSP developed by a multidisciplinary team, including the parent, within forty-five days after the referral is made, (3) periodic reviews of the IFSP with the family at least every six months to determine the degree to which progress toward outcomes is being made and whether modification or revision of the outcomes or EIS is necessary; and (4) an annual meeting to evaluate and revise the IFSP as appropriate.³⁷

For Concerns about a B23 Program: Contact the OEC B23 Family Liaison at the Office of Early Childhood by emailing OEC.B23family@ct.gov or calling 860.500.4420.

The IFSP must be signed by either the child's pediatrician, primary care provider, or qualified personnel,³⁸ and contain a statement of (1) the child's present level of physical development (including vision, hearing, and health status), cognitive development, language and speech development, social or emotional development, and self-help skills, based on acceptable objective criteria; (2) the family's priorities, resources, and concerns relating to enhancing the development of the eligible child; (3) the major outcomes expected to be achieved; the criteria, procedures, and timelines used to determine the degree to which progress toward achieving the outcomes are being made; and whether modifications or revisions of the outcomes are necessary; (4) specific EIS necessary to meet the unique needs of the eligible child and the family, including the frequency, intensity, and method of delivering services; (5) the natural environments in which the



services will be provided; (6) the projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of such services; (7) the name of the approved service provider; (8) the name of the individual service coordinator responsible for the implementation of the plan or an otherwise qualified provider selected by a parent; and (9) the steps to be taken to support the transition of the child into Part B, as appropriate.³⁹

Decisions on the type, intensity, frequency, location, method, and duration of EIS should derive from an open discussion with the family about their concerns, priorities, and resources and what will help them to achieve their desired outcomes. Progress is measured in relation to these family driven goals.

In the event a parent is concerned about services provided under Part C, procedural safeguards are in place to support families. These include the timely resolution of complaints by parents; the right to confidentiality of personally identifiable information; the right of the parents to determine whether they, or their

child, will accept or decline any EIS without jeopardizing other EIS; the opportunity to examine records; the assignment of a surrogate parent as necessary; prior written notice whenever the lead agency or B23 Program proposes to initiate or change, or refuses to initiate or change, the provision of EIS; the right to being fully informed in the parents' native language of all processes related to procedural safeguards and;⁴⁰ the right to use mediation, request a hearing to challenge information in the child's early intervention records,⁴¹ and request a due process hearing.⁴²

Connecticut B23 served approximately seven thousand infants and toddlers during the 2023-2024 school year.⁴³ During Connecticut's 2026 short legislative session, legislators voted to increase the OEC's B23 funds by approximately three million dollars, totaling \$36,093,626 for the state budget for the biennium ending June 30, 2027.⁴⁴

Attorney tip: Requests for EIS records should be directed to the specific B23 Program supporting the family as identified on the IFSP.

As of the date of this publication, state regulations pertaining to the B23 System are under revision.

Gabriela Naomi Sandoval is a Staff Attorney for the CT Office of Early Childhood. She is a former Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) certified by the National Association of Counsel for Children and Child Welfare Attorney in the state of Colorado.

NOTES

¹ American Academy of Pediatrics, "Early Brain Development," accessed May 18, 2026, <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/early-childhood/early-childhood-health-and-development/early-brain-development/>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Zero to Three, "Understanding Brain Development in Babies and Toddlers," accessed May 18, 2026, <https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/distillation/understanding-brain-development-in-babies-and-toddlers/>.

⁶ Zero to Three, "Baby Brain Science," accessed May 18, 2026, <https://www.zerotothree.org/why-0-3/>.

⁷ 20 USC § 1431(a)(2). See also, *Irving Independent School Dist. v. Tatro*, 468 U.S. 883 (1984) (Court of appeals was correct in affirming order granting handicapped minor and her parents' suit for medical procedure, intermittent bladder catheterization, which child could soon perform herself, is "related service" un-

der EHA to be included as related service); *Department of Educ. v. Katherine D.*, 727 F.2d 809 (9th Cir. 1983) (occasional repositioning of suction tube in child's throat, which "even a lay person" could do, is "related service" under EHA), cert. denied, 471 U.S. 1117, 86 L. Ed. 2d 260, 105 S. Ct. 2360 (1985); 20 U.S.C. § 1401 et. seq; United States General Accounting Office, "Statement of Gregory J. Ahart, Director Human Resources Division before the Subcommittee on Handicapped of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources on the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975," (September 10, 1980), accessed May 18, 2026, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/113316.pdf>.

⁸ Pub. L. No. 95-49, § 1, 91 Stat. 230 (1977); Pub. L. No. 98-199, § 1, 97 Stat. 1357 (1983); Pub. L. No. 99-372, § 1, 100 Stat. 796 (1986); Pub. L. No. 99-457, § 1(a), 100 Stat. 1145 (1986); Pub. L. No. 100-630, § 1, 102 Stat. 3289 (1988); Pub. L. No. 101-476, § 1, 104 Stat. 1118 (1990).

⁹ 20 U.S.C. §§ 1431-1445.

¹⁰ The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Pub. L. No. § 108-446.

¹¹ 20 USC § 1400.

¹² 20 USC § 1431.

¹³ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-76a ("Child" means any person twenty-two years of age or younger or, for children requiring special education, until such child is graduated from high school or at the end of the school year during which such child reaches age twenty-two, whichever occurs first.).

¹⁴ 20 USC § 1400 et seq. See also, *J.M. v. N.Y.C. Dep't. of Educ.*, 161 F.4th 149; *A.R. v. Conn. State Bd. Of Educ.*, 5 F.4th 155.

¹⁵ 20 USC § 1400(c). See also, 34 CFR §§ 300.109, 300.320; *Sylvie M. v. Board of Educ.*, 48 Supp. 2d 681.

¹⁶ 20 USC § 1414(d)(1)(B).

¹⁷ 20 USC § 1414(a). See also, 34 CFR § 300.9.

¹⁸ 20 USC 1416(a), 34 CFR § 300.600. See also, Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-76d(b).

¹⁹ 20 USC § 1412(a)(5), 34 CFR 300.114.

²⁰ See, Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248l (Or, children who turn age three during the summer months prior to entering preschool). See also, 34 CFR § 303.211, 20 USC § 1431.

²¹ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248d(c). See also, 34 CFR 303.420.

²² Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248d(c).

²³ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248(9).

²⁴ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248d(c).

²⁵ 34 CFR § 303.24.

²⁶ 34 CFR § 303.344.

²⁷ Id. See also, 34 CFR § 303.26.

²⁸ 20 USC 1439(a)(3).

²⁹ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248(4).

³⁰ 20 USC § 1432(4). See also, 34 CFR. 303.13 and Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248(3).

³¹ 34 CFR 303.521(b).

³² 20 USC § 1432(4).

³³ 34 CFR § 303.120.

³⁴ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248. See also, Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248d, 20 USC § 1433, and 34 CFR § 303.201.

³⁵ See, 20 USC § 1435(a)(10). See also, United States Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, "State General Supervision Responsibilities under Parts B and C of the IDEA," OSEP QA 23-01, July 24, 2023, accessed May 18, 2026, https://www.sites.ed.gov/idea/files/Guidance_on_State_General_Supervision_Responsibilities_under_Parts_B_and_C_of_IDEA-07-24-2023.pdf.

³⁶ U.S. Department of Education, "State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report: Part C for State Formula Grant Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for reporting on FFY 2023," accessed May 18, 2026, <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2F-sites.ed.gov%2Fidea%2Ffiles%2FCT-C-SPP-APR-FFY23.docx&wdOrig-in=BROWSELINK>.

³⁷ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248e(a).

³⁸ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248e(c).

³⁹ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-248e(b). See also, 34 CFR 303.344.

⁴⁰ 20 USC § 1439. See also, Conn. Gen. Stat. 17a-248f and Regs. Conn. State Agencies §§ 17a-248-8 through 17a-248-10.

⁴¹ 34 CFR § 303.411.

⁴² 34 CFR § 303.430. See also, Regs. Conn. State Agencies §§ 17a-248-8 through 17a-248-10.

⁴³ U.S. Department of Education, "State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report: Part C for State Formula Grant Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for reporting on FFY 2024," accessed June 29, 2026, <https://www.birth23.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/CT-01-SPP-PART-C-FFY-2024-25-3629-20260414103545.pdf>.

⁴⁴ P.A. No. 26-68. See also, P.A. No. 25-168.

A Year in Review

By PAIGE M. VAILLANCOURT

It's hard to say goodbye to something when you've put so many hours into it, even if only for a year (or two, if you count the pre-planning). I took on the task of becoming the Young Lawyers Section chair because I sincerely care about the organization. I've been on the YLS Executive Committee for seven years because the YLS was my first real look at what a lawyer is and can be. It made the white collar world not so alien. It gave me exposure in my practice area and my first book of business. It's given me perspective and good friends. It's never been just a line on my resume. I served it and it served me.

I'm not sure that I accomplished half of what I intended as chair. We all have lofty goals coming into leadership positions, after all. But I do believe I tilled some soil in which coming years can grow and flourish.

"I've been on the YLS Executive Committee for seven years because the YLS was my first real look at what a lawyer is and can be. It made the white collar world not so alien. It gave me exposure in my practice area and my first book of business. It's given me perspective and good friends. It's never been just a line on my resume. I served it and it served me."

ish. We made inroads at the law schools and had some of the highest turnout at our events from law students that we've seen since I've been on the Executive Committee. We made connections with other young lawyer and young professional groups that will only strengthen as long as we maintain them. We had at-capacity events that attendees look forward to next

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year. We had a fantastic year. Our Executive Committee as a whole is what makes the YLS tick, not a singular member. Our officers, directors, and committee chairs put in real work, often unnoticed by the bar at large. I wanted to highlight some of our standout events and let them speak for our accomplishments.

This year's extraordinary Diversity Dinner truly shined because of the effort that Hugh T. Sokolski, Jr. poured into it. The dinner brought 160 law students, practitioners, and scholars from the CBA's Future of the Legal Profession Scholars Program together at the stunning Pond House Café in West Hartford to celebrate the diversity of our bar with excellent food

and conversation. It featured Speaker of the House Matt Ritter as the keynote and a panel of practitioners from a range of legal fields, including Prerna Rao of Omnia Law, Moy Ogilvie of McCarter and English, Dru Lavasseur of Dru Lavasseur Consulting, and Elicia Pegues Spearman of Girl Scouts of Connecticut (who brought a way for me to shamelessly stock my cabinets with cookies). The panel was moderated by Moses Beckett of Statewide Legal Services and panelists discussed the challenges they faced while navigating various aspects of our profession. If you missed it, you missed out.

The YLS teamed up with the Connecticut Society of CPA's New and Young Professionals to brave some frigid weather for a Day of Giving in December, which raised a whopping \$13,085 for CT Foodshare and nearly 1,000 new toys for CT Children's Medical Center. It was really a sight to see. This event replaced the YLS's annual Horn of Plenty with an eye on creating interprofessional relationships and expanding the drive's impact. We also teamed up with the New Haven County Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section for an event at CT Foodshare where participants helped inspect and sort donations.

These events, an abundance of pro bono hours, and a number of other charity initiatives, such as a Habitat for Humanity build, helped our Executive Committee members surpass our 1,000 service hour pledge. In addition, our annual holiday party raised \$1,548 for the Feeding Families Foundation, which assists caregivers of pediatric patients with the cost of food while staying in the hospital. And the YLS softball team participated in the annual Snowball Charity Softball Tournament, which benefitted New Reach, a homeless shelter in New Haven dedicated to helping individuals and families find stability and permanent housing.

The YLS put on a number fun and unique social events this bar year. Karen Thomas, a local etiquette coach, had us questioning everything we thought we knew about how to comport ourselves at the table at our etiquette dinner. It was a hilarious night of extremely useful guidance on various aspects of networking with instruction on social graces, navigating a table setting, client dining, som-

melier etiquette, tipping culture, dining styles, and reciprocal ordering. We had a coach from See Tea Improv lead our litigation improv event, which featured a workshop aimed at improving courtroom skills, such as regulating your voice and thinking on your feet. We also hosted networking events specifically for law students and a family-friendly Yard Goats game. We capped the year at the New Britain Museum of Art with a showcase of the history of the YLS as part of the CBA's 150th anniversary celebration.

Our committee chairs organized 10 CLEs, many in conjunction with their "big bar" section counterparts and many of which included the insight of the bench. Topics were not just 101s on subjects such as negotiation, alternative dispute resolution, and procedure, but also comprehensive panels on Loper, merchant cash advances, and the Connecticut Data Privacy Act. This year, the YLS focused on making our CLEs mixer-type events to give law students, practitioners of all experience levels, and the bench an opportunity to meet and con-

verse face-to-face. If this sounds like something your section is interested in, make sure you connect with your YLS counterpart next year. If you don't have one, send a promising young lawyer our way.

As I look back on the year, I keep thinking about a conversation I had with Emily Giansanto where she told me she was going to miss being the CBA's president. I told her I was looking forward to taking a step back from the YLS and assuming a more advisory role. But as my successor does her planning for next year, I'm finding it hard to give it up. I feel like I'm missing out. I liked steering the ship, for all the hours lost. And the organization has been such a big part of my career that it feels strange to wind down. But I know I leave the YLS in the most capable hands of the incoming officers: Sara K. Bonaiuto, incoming chair; Jermaine Brookshire, Jr., chair-elect; Olivia Benson, treasurer; and Meaghan Kirby, secretary. They've all been integral and outstanding members of the YLS Executive Committee, and I cannot wait to see what they have in store. n



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