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May 31, 2013

Delegate Mark Hunt
Room 400M, Building 1
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305
mhunt@markahunt.com

RE: House Bill 2438 – Certified Legal Assistant Act

Dear Delegate Hunt:

The National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc. (“NFPA”) was founded in 1974 as the first non-profit paralegal professional organization in the United States, and currently represents the largest number of individual paralegal members in the United States.

On behalf of NFPA, I write to respectfully request the inclusion of the NFPA paralegal certification examinations as potential qualifications under House Bill 2438 “Certified Legal Assistant Act.”

When House Bill 3302, “Certified Legal Assistant Act” was initially proposed in 2010, we requested the addition of the PACE Registered Paralegal exam – an advanced paralegal certification for paralegals launched in 1996 – as one of the specific qualifications under proposed HB3302. A copy of the letter is attached for ease of reference, or may be found on our website at: http://www.paralegals.org/associations/2270/files/2010content/West_Va_letter_8-2010.PDF. The RP credential is nationally recognized by many state Bar Associations as a qualification for their paralegal programs.

In 2011, we launched another certification exam for entry-level paralegals: the Paralegal CORE Competency Exam (PCCE), which confers the CORE Registered Paralegal (CRP) credential on those who successfully pass the exam. The PCCE is comparable to the Certified Paralegal/Certified Legal Assistant (CP/CLA) certifying examination of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc. (“NALA”) in qualifications to sit for the exam, as well as subject matter. A comparison of these exams (and others) is also attached for ease of reference, or may be viewed on our website at: http://www.paralegals.org/includes/get_asset.asp?asset=922. We are confident that Bar

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Associations and other programs will identify the CRP credential with the same alacrity as the RP credential. In recent months, the Indiana State Bar Association voted unanimously to accept our new credentialing exam for paralegal associate members as a qualification. We expect other Bar Associations will soon follow suit.

NFPA contracts with Professional Examination Service (PES), a testing organization with more than 60 years of experience in the development and administration of licensing and certification exams for psychometrically sound tests. The development includes surveys of paralegal educators and attorneys to ensure the content conforms with the knowledge required for the paralegal profession. It's important to note that NALA's exams are currently undergoing a vast change from their original design, to conform with psychometric testing standards which NFPA has always adhered to in development of its certification exams.

NFPA is pleased to provide any additional resources on this particular topic which may assist you. Please contact me at the telephone number or email address above with any questions or if additional information is required. Thank you for your time in reviewing this request. We hope you consider adding NFPA's two certification exams as potential qualifications under HB 2438 or a future bill which you may consider related to paralegal profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L B Vessels".

Lisa B. Vessels, RP, CP, FRP
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