



NFPA – The Leader
of the Paralegal Profession®

January 5, 2017

Jennifer Zakrzewski, RP®
Gordon & Rees
95 Glastonbury Blvd., Suite 206
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Re: Voluntary Paralegal Regulation

Dear Jennifer:

Thank you for giving NFPA the opportunity to review and comment on the voluntary paralegal regulation program being proposed by the Connecticut Bar Association Paralegal Division. We enclose the following items:

1. NFPA's Position Statement in Support of using NFPA's CRP™ certification as a qualifier for the Connecticut Bar Association Connecticut Registered Paralegal credential;
2. NFPA's Position Statement on the Regulation of the Paralegal Profession; and
3. NFPA's Model Plan for Voluntary Paralegal Regulation.

As the NFPA endorses the implementation of regulation to establish standards for all paralegals, we commend you for your efforts. After a thorough review of the CBA program in comparison to NFPA's Position Statement on the Regulation of the Paralegal Profession, we confirm that the Connecticut plan meets at least four out of five of the NFPA's criteria as set out in that Position Statement, and therefore, we support it. We especially applaud the use of national certification exams such as NFPA's RP® and CRP™ certifications for use as qualifiers for the credential.

With that said, however, we do have the following comments/suggestions for the CBA plan:

1. We note that you require those who qualify for the credential through one of the national paralegal exams to be a member in good standing of the national paralegal association through which the exam was taken. The NFPA, at least, does not require membership in their organization to take their certification exams, so there may be Connecticut paralegals who are PACE® or PCCE™-certified who are not members of the NFPA, and that may be the situation with NALA, as well. We would,

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however, support a condition that the candidate's credential is valid and not expired. We respectfully suggest that you revise that provision of the exam qualifier.

2. There is concern on the part of representatives of our member associations about the proposed definition of paralegal to only include those who currently work for Connecticut Licensed Attorneys. There may be valid circumstances where i.e. a paralegal works in a legal department of a corporation without an attorney and the actual supervising attorney is with outside counsel; or where someone works for an attorney licensed in another state but in certain circumstances is authorized to practice in Connecticut. You may want to consider some type of an exception for a paralegal who has special circumstances and doesn't necessarily work under the direct supervision of a Connecticut Licensed Attorney.
3. There is some concern about CBA's proposed grandfathering provision, which requires ten consecutive years of substantive paralegal work. As you may know, neither the PACE® or PCCE™ grandfathering provisions require consecutive years of experience, just that the applicant has a requisite number of years of substantive, attested paralegal experience. Especially since CBA is using the NFPA exams as qualifiers for this credential and therefore are in essence using the qualifying process of those exams, we respectfully suggest that you not require consecutive years of experience. We acknowledge that you have written in a waiver for a period of six months or less, but there may be valid circumstances in which a paralegal might find themselves unable to work for longer than a six month period of time. We feel it is the number of years of substantive experience rather than the fact that they have been consecutive that should be the qualifying consideration.

We are aware that you will be meeting with representatives of the CCPA and NHCAP on Thursday, January 5, 2017, and we respectfully request that you take heed of their concerns and allow them the opportunity to take part in the committee overseeing and shaping this program. As I'm sure you're aware, Connecticut has a diverse pool of talented paralegal leaders who would be willing and very able to assist the CBA with this endeavor.

We would further suggest that this not be pushed through to the next level until the provisions of the plan can be worked out to everyone's satisfaction.

Sincerely,



Valerie Wilus, RP®, Pa.C.P.

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January 5, 2017

Page 3

and



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NFPA Vice President & Director of Positions and Issues

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cc: Central Connecticut Paralegal Association
New Haven County Association of Paralegals