

PRESS RELEASE

February 29, 2020

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PARALEGAL ASSOCIATIONS, INC.
INITIATIVE AMENDS THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
DEFINITION OF PARALEGAL**

THE American Bar Association (ABA), at its Midyear Meeting of the House of Delegates, adopted amendments which revised the ABA’s definition of the term “paralegal.”

In 2018, the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc.’s (NFPA) Committee on Marketing the Paralegal Profession (Committee) requested the ABA’s Standing Committee on Paralegals to review the definition of a paralegal as outlined in the ABA Guidelines for the Approval of Paralegal Programs.

The titles of “paralegal” and “legal assistant” have been used interchangeably in the ABA’s definition of a paralegal since August 1997. In February 2020, ABA Resolution 102B adopted changes to the definition of paralegal to be more reflective of the current terminology used by the legal community. This amendment eliminates the term “legal assistant” from the definition of “paralegal” and no longer identifies both terms as an interchangeable reference.

“We are in a time when the paralegal profession is evolving before our very eyes. We now see some paralegals being trained to become licensed professionals to help bridge the Access to Justice gap, and this ABA change in the definition of a paralegal is just more evidence of that change,” said Lori J. Boris, RP®, MnCP, NFPA’s Vice President & Director of Position and Issues. She further stated, “the NFPA, through the Committee, encouraged the ABA to be on the front edge of that change, and we are so excited that they stepped up to the plate.”

“The NFPA’s goal has always been to advance the paralegal profession and working with the ABA to differentiate “paralegal” and “legal assistant” goes a long way toward educating the legal community and the public about who paralegals are and what we can do,” added Nancy A. Cominoli, RP®, Chair, NFPA’s Marketing the Paralegal Profession Committee.

The ABA’s Standing Committee on Paralegals’ Mission is to improve the American system of justice by establishing ABA standards for the education of paralegals and by promoting attorneys’ professional, effective and ethical utilization of paralegals.

Ronell B. Badua, NFPA’s Vice President & Director of Marketing, praised the Committee, “their commitment to work with the ABA in understanding the effective use of paralegals in the delivery of legal services is a significant recognition for the profession and exemplifies the core of NFPA’s Mission – to advance the profession and be the leader of the paralegal profession.”

Founded in 1974, NFPA is a non-profit organization that was established as the first national paralegal association and headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. NFPA's Core Purpose is to advance the paralegal profession while promoting a global presence for the paralegal profession and leadership in the legal community.

ENDS

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