

ABA House of Delegates Report
By Juan Hoyos, ABA Delegate, MSBA

The American Bar Association's House of Delegates convened on February 9, 2015, at the ABA's mid-year meeting in Houston, Texas. The House of Delegates meets twice a year at the ABA Annual and Midyear Meetings. Action taken by the House of Delegates on specific issues becomes official ABA policy.

The House of Delegates consists of 560 members. Fourteen Minnesota lawyers represented the Minnesota delegation at the February meeting. The group passed several resolutions that will define the ABA's policy in the future.

The House passed resolutions encouraging laws that prohibit the private possession, sale and transport of dangerous wild animals; encouraging law schools and bar associations to provide debt counseling and financial education for law students; encouraging restraint in the use of shackles during juvenile proceedings and allowing a hearing to consider whether such restraints are necessary and a resolution urging governmental agencies to repeal stand your ground laws or severely limit them.

The House also passed resolutions urging governments to enact civil protection order statutes that extend protection to minor and adult victims of sexual assault, rape and stalking, outside of the context of an intimate partner relationship and to support the provision of counsel to unaccompanied children in immigration proceedings.

Finally, the House passed a resolution urging jurisdictions that impose capital punishment to establish protocols in an open and transparent manner and require public review and comment prior to final adoption. The resolution will empower the ABA to submit an Amicus Brief in a case pending before the U.S. Supreme Court.

At its next meeting, in August 2015, the ABA House of Delegates will consider a possible resolution encouraging the establishment of a Uniform Bar Exam.

Finally, the president of the ABA, William Hubbard, addressed the House of Delegates to recognize the 800 year anniversary of the Magna Carta, and extended an invitation to the re-dedication of the ABA's Magna Carta monument this year, June 11-14, at Runnymede, England. For more information please visit: www.americanbar.org



