

November 2018

Hennepin County Bar Association Policy on Public Advocacy

Mission

The Hennepin County Bar Association exists to serve the needs of its membership by advancing professionalism, ethical conduct, diversity, competence, practice development, and collegiality in the legal profession. The association shall strive to ensure the fairness and accessibility of the legal system, promote public understanding and confidence in our system of justice, and work with the courts to improve the administration of justice.

Rationale for the Policy on Public Advocacy

The Hennepin County Bar Association (“HCBA”) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, voluntary bar association representing the interests of its membership. As a voluntary bar association, one of the HCBA’s purposes is to take public advocacy positions on issues related to fulfilling its mission.

Only the HCBA board of directors, by majority vote, may adopt individual public advocacy positions on behalf of the association. This policy establishes permanent and transparent criteria that the board of directors will apply in evaluating whether to adopt a proposed public advocacy position.

Criteria for Adopting a Public Advocacy Position

In evaluating whether to adopt a proposed public advocacy position, the threshold consideration for the board of directors is determining whether the proposed position (1) falls within the HCBA’s mission statement and (2) is likely to have a sufficient impact on the HCBA membership.

If the board of directors determines the proposed public advocacy position satisfies the two threshold criteria, the board will consider, but not be bound by, the following three factors in evaluating whether to adopt the proposed position: (a) whether the issue that the proposed position addresses directly affects lawyers or is closely related to the legal profession; (b) whether legal expertise assists in understanding the issue that the proposed position addresses; and (c) whether by adopting the position the association may realistically expect to exert influence on the issue that the proposed position addresses.

Process for Proposing Adoption of Public Advocacy Position

Any member of the HCBA, section, committee, or stakeholder group may propose that the HCBA consider a public advocacy position. A person or entity requesting consideration shall submit to the Executive Director the Proposal for Public Advocacy Position Questionnaire. The Executive Director will subsequently share the request with the President and Executive Committee to begin the process of board consideration.