OSBA Forms Pro Bono Committee Task Force

COLUMBUS, Ohio (September 26, 2007) The Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA) today announced the formation of a 31-member Pro Bono Committee Task Force charged with establishing a statewide network of locally-based committees to promote and facilitate pro bono opportunities for attorneys.

OSBA President Rob Ware said “the task force, comprised of lawyers, judges and members of the legal aid community, will work to create a pro bono committee in each of Ohio’s judicial appellate districts. Similar systems exist in Indiana, Florida and other states, and we believe these locally-based committees can enhance the delivery of pro bono legal services n Ohio as well.”

David A. Kutik, partner in the Cleveland office of Jones Day, is chairing the task force. Kutik said the task force will also work closely with the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF) and other Ohio legal services organizations on the project. OSBA Past President E. Jane Taylor leading those efforts for OLAF.

“Our goal here is to establish a network of committees across Ohio to enhance the delivery of pro bono legal services,” said Kutik. “The judges, lawyers and members of the legal aid community who have agreed to serve on the task force bring with them the commitment and the know-how to create this expanded pro bono delivery system. The first job of the Task Force will be to establish local committees to take advantage of the knowledge and preferences of the judiciary and the bar to meet the specific needs of each community. These committees will take the lead on planning and implementing pro bono programs in partnership with legal aid organizations throughout the state”

“The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation is committed to equal access to justice and works to assure that resources, programs and services exist statewide to serve the unmet civil legal needs of Ohio’s poor. Working with this task force to enhance Ohio’s pro bono network serves to further OLAF’s commitment to Ohioans and opens additional pro bono opportunities for Ohio lawyers,” said Taylor, OLAF’s associate director for pro bono.

The task force held its first meeting in Columbus today. Supreme Court of Ohio Chief Justice Moyer addressed those in attendance about the importance of this pro bono effort. The focus of the first meeting was on developing a work plan for creating and implementing this expanded, locally-focused pro bono network.

(MORE)
The Ohio State Bar Association, founded in 1880, is a voluntary association representing approximately 25,000 members of the bench and bar of Ohio as well as nearly 4,000 legal assistants and law students. Through its activities and the activities of its related organizations, the OSBA serves both its members and the public by promoting the highest standards in the practice of law and the administration of justice.