

May 15, 2008

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

H.R. 6049, Reinstatement of Section 120, Group Legal Services

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The American Bar Association strongly supports the Committee's inclusion in the Chairman's mark of a one year extension of Section 120, Group Legal Services. H.R. 6049 would reinstate the tax-preferred status of qualified group legal services plans.

The ABA has long supported group legal services plans as a way to increase access to the justice system for low and middle-income workers and their families. These plans allow covered individuals to address legal issues before they become significant problems, reducing demands on already overburdened court systems and instilling confidence in our justice system.

Group legal plans efficiently and inexpensively provide basic legal services to covered workers and their families. Generally, group legal plan benefits include assistance with the purchase and maintenance of a home (including the review of mortgage documents), preparation of a will and guardianship documents, adoption proceedings, probate services and resolution of family law matters, including collection of child support and protective orders in domestic violence cases.

As a result of recent natural disasters and current economic uncertainty, Americans are more aware than ever of the need for legal advice to plan for their families' future and financial well-being. **New legal issues that disproportionately affect lower and middle income workers and families continue to arise, including consumer fraud and now the mortgage foreclosure crisis.** In addition to affecting home owners, the foreclosures are also forcing renters from their homes.

Reinstatement of the tax-preferred status of qualified group legal services plans will encourage more employers to offer this important benefit. The ABA strongly supports its inclusion in H.R. 6049.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Susman
Director

cc: Representative Fortney H. "Pete" Stark
Representative Dave Camp