

State Bar Legislative Update

FY '08 budget appropriations for programs whose requests were supported by the State Bar:

- Legal services for victims of domestic violence - \$94,279 increase
- Appellate Resource Center – continuation of \$800,000
- Ga. Public Defender Standards Council - \$35.4M
- CASA program - \$225,000 increase
- Business Court pilot program – continuation of \$100,000

Other proposals approved by the State Bar include the following.

- Commission on Judicial Service:
HB 120 – creates a travel allowance for appellate judges like that of legislators, passed house and senate, waiting governor's signature.
HB 119 – judicial salary increase passed house and is in Senate Appropriations Committee; will carry-over to 2008.
- Business Law Section: Technical changes in Corporations Code, LLC – SB 234, passed house and senate, waiting governor's signature.
- Consumer Law Section: Disclosures in Arbitration Agreements – to be introduced next session.
- Real Property Section: Authorizes an additional fee for clerks that cross reference cancellations of security instruments filed in real property records – HB 386, passed house and senate, waiting governor's signature.
- GPDSC: HB 586 - limits obligation of GPDSC in providing attorneys and fees and specifies that the county must pay any additional costs, passed house and senate, waiting governor's signature.

The State Bar took a position opposing the following bills.

- HB 115 – would allow persons not graduating from an ABA-accredited law school to sit for the Bar exam, remains in House Judiciary committee.
- SB 271 – would shorten the period of time within which a tax deed would ripen by prescription, remains in a House Ways and Means subcommittee.
- HB 89 – a concealed weapons/"take your gun to work" bill that some senators proposed amending to eliminate the principle of vicarious liability. The State Bar opposed that amendment and the vicarious liability section was removed from HB 89.
- SB 143 – would expand the opt-out provisions of the Indigent Defense Act of 2003, remains in Senate Judiciary committee.

Legislative offices are still working on a final composite of legislation and house/senate actions during the '07 session. When the composite is complete and we have reviewed, we will e-mail a final update. However, as always, if you have questions, please contact us.

The General Assembly will re-convene in special session to address the Governor's veto of the supplemental budget. The State Bar supports a \$9.5 million appropriation in that budget for the Ga. Public Defenders Standards Council.