



May 3, 2006

Dear CBA Member:

You probably are aware of the recent media coverage of the Cleveland Bar Association's complaint against Brian Woods for the unauthorized practice of law. We wanted to let you know that the CBA has decided to seek dismissal of this action.

The Bar Association is required by Ohio Supreme Court rules to investigate and, where appropriate, pursue unauthorized practice of law (UPL) cases. The Association's UPL Committee is one of the country's most prominent. It was our UPL Committee that successfully prosecuted the Sharp Estates trust mill operation for selling incomplete or inappropriate estate planning products and services to vulnerable Ohio consumers.

It has long been the practice of the CBA to have any proposed UPL action reviewed and approved by the Board before it is filed. Unfortunately, the Board did not review and approve this action. The UPL Committee had a legitimate technical basis for pursuing a case against Mr. Woods, and did so in the interests of protecting the children, who are entitled to representation by a qualified attorney to help negotiate the complicated facets of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). Despite the good intentions and technical basis for pursuing this case, the Board believes that filing this complaint was a mistake.

A petition is currently pending before the U.S. Supreme Court to review the issue of parents representing their children before the Courts. We believe it would be wise to allow the Supreme Court to first resolve the unsettled state of the law in this important area of federal law.

Until the Court rules, we intend to invest our efforts toward addressing the broader and very real needs of parents with special needs children. We will be reaching out to some of you with expertise in this field to help us better understand this issue and develop solutions that will help provide qualified legal representation for families with special needs children.

Our Bar Association already has one of the largest pro bono legal services programs in the U.S. Last year alone, close to 2,000 Cleveland Bar Association lawyers devoted nearly 85,000 hours of pro bono legal and other public service to our community. We are proud of the good work you do through the Our Commitment to Our Community initiative. We encourage all of you to do even more, especially for families impacted by IDEA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Kelly Tompkins", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

P. Kelly Tompkins
President, Cleveland Bar Association