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Out-of-state Attorney Admission Fees Increased To Expand Student Loan Forgiveness Program

HARRISBURG, Aug. 24, 2010 — The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has increased fees for out-of-state lawyers who practice in the Commonwealth in order to finance a student loan forgiveness program for attorneys employed by agencies that help people who cannot afford legal representation.

The adjustment in fees from \$100 to \$200 applies only to attorneys eligible to practice in Pennsylvania as counsel *pro hac vice* — a legal term meaning “for this occasion.” The fee boost, which takes effect in 30 days, follows the Supreme Court’s recent decision to designate proceeds from the fee into the Loan Repayment Assistance Program, or LRAP, administered by the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation. Beginning September 1, the Bar Foundation will receive loan applications from attorneys working for qualified agencies that provide legal assistance in civil matters to indigent Pennsylvanians. The LRAP loans will be forgiven if the attorneys remain employed at the legal aid organizations for one year.

“Expanding the ability to attract and maintain quality counsel for the Commonwealth’s legal assistance programs at no cost to taxpayers will greatly benefit indigent Pennsylvanians,” said Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille. “Easing student loan burdens is one way to attract attorneys to legal service organizations where resources are scarce and the needs are great.”

The prior \$100 *pro hac vice* fee generated about \$175,000 to \$200,000 per year. Proceeds from the increased fee are earmarked specifically for LRAP use, allowing a doubling of the loans available. Instead of loans to about 85 eligible attorneys at \$2,000 per person per year, funds will be available to 170 eligible attorneys or, alternatively, to increase the amount of individual loans.

Pennsylvania ranks in the bottom one-third of states in *pro hac vice* fees charged. The increase puts Pennsylvania in the median of all the states, meaning 25 states charge a higher fee. Moreover, fees may be waived if the out-of-state attorney is representing an indigent client.

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A first-time-ever fee for *pro hac vice* admission was adopted in 2007, and the proceeds were designated to go to the Interest On Lawyers Trust Account program, which funds civil legal services for Pennsylvanians who cannot afford to pay for those services. The fee applies to those practicing in the state's trial and appellate courts. Even though a lawyer may be admitted to practice in another state, he or she must petition to appear as a counsel of record in the Commonwealth if not licensed here.

(For more information, visit: www.paiolta.org)

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