

MBA NEWS

20 West Street, Boston, MA 02111-1204 • communications@massbar.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sept. 29, 2010

CONTACT:

Jennifer Rosinski (617) 338-0675

Tricia M. Oliver (617) 338-0677

MBA task force to study improving foreclosure laws

Committee to train attorneys to better assist foreclosure victims

BOSTON, Mass. — The Massachusetts Bar Association announces the formation of the Joint Foreclosure Legislation Task Force, which strives to improve both the state's foreclosure law and borrowers' access to assistance in the foreclosure process. A collaboration among bar associations, legal services, real estate attorneys and banker's associations, the task force plans to draft a legislative proposal to modernize foreclosure law in Massachusetts and ensure a fair and efficient foreclosure process.

"The development of this task force comes at a critical time when many Massachusetts residents are struggling to stay in their homes," MBA President Denise Squillante said. "The MBA hopes this new effort will result in a more streamlined foreclosure process in Massachusetts – making it easier for both homeowners and their attorneys to navigate the system."

The task force includes representatives from the MBA's Property Law and Access to Justice sections, as well as the Real Estate Bar Association of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Bankers Association, the Massachusetts Mortgage Bankers Association, Western Massachusetts Legal Services, and other real estate practitioners.

"Piecemeal changes to the state's mortgage foreclosure laws over the years have created a foreclosure process that is incomprehensible to borrowers and disruptive to lenders trying to comply with the law," said Beth Barton, task force chair and vice chair of the MBA's Property Law Section. "The task force strives to build a clear, open and understandable foreclosure process, from the ground up, which will benefit both homeowners and lenders."

In conjunction with the task force, the MBA has formed the Foreclosure Education Committee to teach attorneys how to counsel and advocate for individuals facing foreclosure. The free education program will kick off on Oct. 28 with a seminar covering changes in foreclosure laws. The program will also be available via MBA On Demand, an innovative approach to continuing legal education that allows users to watch programming from the comfort of their home or office. Seminars to follow will cover topics that include HAMP Loan Modifications, Alternatives to Foreclosure and others.

The task force will be led by:

Chair Elizabeth J. Barton

Vice chair of the MBA Property law Section Council, Barton is a title insurance underwriter with

CATIC in its Eastern Massachusetts office. She is also a member of the Real Estate Bar Association of Massachusetts, serving on its Title Standards Committee and Commercial Real Estate Finance Committee; a member of the Women's Bar Association of Massachusetts, serving on its Membership Committee; and a member of the Merrimack Valley Bar Association. Barton lectures for Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, the MBA and REBA. She lives in Natick.

Vice Chair Laurel H. Siegel

Chair of the MBA Property Law Section Council, Siegel has practiced commercial and residential real estate law for 15 years. Prior to starting her solo practice in 2008, she was a principal at Siegel, Wagner & Swartz LLC in Boston, where she was the managing member of the real estate department. Previously, Siegel practiced at Kotin, Crabtree & Strong LLC. She was one of the real estate "Rising Stars" in *Law & Politics Magazine's* Super Lawyers listings in 2006 and 2007. Siegel is a member of Real Estate Bar Association and serves on its legislative committee. The Medford resident is on the Board of Directors of the Medford Square Market and a member of the Medford Chamber of Commerce.

Incorporated in 1911, the Massachusetts Bar Association is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence and respect for the law. The MBA represents a diverse group of attorneys, judges and legal professionals across the commonwealth.