



MUSLIM BAR  
ASSOCIATION  
OF NEW YORK

P.O. Box 2244, New York, New York 10085 – [www.mubany.org](http://www.mubany.org)

Officers:

February 5, 2017

*President*  
Saira Hussain

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Nehal Siddiqui

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Umair Khan

John W. McConnell, Esq., Counsel,  
Office of Court Administration  
25 Beaver Street, 11th Fl.,  
New York, New York 10004

Re: Proposed New York Continuing Legal Education Requirement for Diversity,  
Inclusion and the Elimination of Bias

Dear Mr. McConnell:

Board of Directors:

Abid Hossain

Sabila Khan

Merium Malik

Adeel Mangi

Nausheen Rokerya

We write in response to your memorandum dated December 14, 2016 inviting public comment on a proposed amendment of the rule addressing mandatory continuing legal education for attorneys in New York that would impose a one-credit requirement addressing diversity, inclusion and the elimination of bias.

The Muslim Bar Association of New York (MuBANY) is a member-driven bar association open to any interested lawyer or law student. MuBANY was created in 2006 to serve the educational and professional needs of Muslim legal professionals and law students living and working in the New York metropolitan area. MuBANY accomplishes this by organizing educational, networking, and professional development events and services, building relationships with other bar associations and legal organizations, and assisting members of the larger New York Muslim community. As you are aware, MuBANY was among the Bar Associations that submitted the memorandum supporting a rule change, as referenced in your December 14, 2016 communication (the “Memorandum”).

A thoughtful diversity and inclusion CLE policy would have a number of benefits including, but not limited to, improved representation of clients, increased awareness of the need for diversity in the legal profession, and better recognition of the needs of minority groups throughout the legal system.

In 2015, MuBANY co-sponsored a program at the New York City Bar Association created by one of its members, Sania W. Khan, entitled “The Muslim-American Community: An Introduction to the Basics of Islamic Practices and Relevant Emerging Legal Trends.” The CLE was attended by over one hundred attorneys in New York City, and covered areas ranging from religious discrimination/accommodation in the workplace, Fourth Amendment privacy concerns, Islamic practice in prison, and First Amendment issues. Of note in this context - the CLE included a cultural competency portion in which Imam Khalid Latif, of New York University and the New York Police Department, gave an overview of the Muslim American experience.

As a Muslim organization, we are particularly concerned about the increased number of hate crimes and bias incidents in our country and state over the last year and a half. We were particularly proud of co-hosting a recent event with the New York City Bar Association regarding the representation of victims of hate crimes and peaceful protestors. This was a very well attended event, which reached capacity, a testament to the desire for such training.

There is an urgent need for diversity and inclusion education. For a state as diverse as New York, ignorance to understanding other cultures and faith traditions may have unfortunate consequences. We strongly believe that greater education and awareness strengthens our ability to better represent clients, improve the court system, and even enhance collegiality.

For the reasons set forth in the Memorandum and those stated above, MuBANY continues to support the proposed CLE requirement and believes it will have a material impact in advancing the goal of an inclusive and diverse legal profession. We thank you for your action on this topic and are happy to assist further in any way that would be useful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Saira Hussain". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left and a vertical stroke extending upwards.

Saira Hussain  
President  
Muslim Bar Association of New York