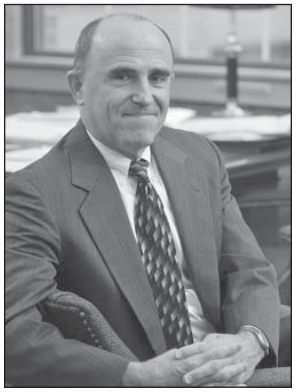
Message from the Section Chair



Over the last several months something typical happened that reminds us of the value of Section membership and participation.

In late May, the National Labor Relations Board announced it was considering merging Region 3, based in Upstate New York, with Region 6, covering western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and parts of Ohio. Included was a proposal to move the Regional Office to Pittsburgh. The Section immediately assembled a work group to respond in the hopes of keeping Region 3 intact and the Buffalo Region Office open and accessible to our members and their clients. The end of the story is that the NLRB ultimately announced it was adding territory to both Region 3 and Region 6 and keeping Buffalo as the Region 3 home office.

This is an obvious good result for us and our clients. How we got there makes for a revealing example of the strength and value of our Section.

Immediately after the original announcement, the Labor Relations Law and Procedure Committee Co-chairs, Allyson Belovin and Peter Conrad, assembled a committee to educate the NLRB on our position as a Section on the value of locating the Regional Office in Buffalo. In short order, a comprehensive position statement was prepared that eloquently laid out the Section's position. A lot of joint effort, all *pro bono*, went into that position statement. We are told by our friends at the NLRB that our position statement made a significant difference. Allyson Belovin, Mairead Connor, Peter Conrad, Catherine Creighton, Louis DiLorenzo, James Gleason, Randall Odza, and Kenneth Wagner dipped into their own pockets to travel to Washington, D.C. to represent the Section in a meeting with the Board. It was an extraordinary effort by many Section members.

The work group was comprised of both senior and junior attorneys representing management and labor, upstate and downstate, all working for the common good of the Section and the clients we serve.

The effort was successful. But the process also accomplished other positive results.

First, it revealed just how much we have in common. Allyson and Peter as downstate lawyers with downstate clients had nothing to gain from the NLRB's decision either way. Yet both spent many hours working on this project. Management and labor attorneys worked together seamlessly to a common end. That shared mutual purpose will pay dividends later when our positions are not the same and our clients are not aligned.

Second, we had the opportunity to tell the Board and the longtime public servants that work there how much we value them as an agency and as dedicated professionals. That isn't always possible in the heat of battle when our clients are frustrated and want us to "kill the messenger" from government. Our friends at the Board were visibly moved by that.

Finally, the proposal and the effort to address it motivated the Section to invite the NLRB leadership to our fall meeting. They accepted and as a result we all were privileged to "break bread" with the NLRB leadership and each other in a setting where the mutual respect we share transcended the positions we take as advocates.

This example is repeatedly played out in our Section. Section membership reminds us that we have much in common even when we take passionate positions on behalf of our clients.

All of this is good. It shows the value of our Section. And it pointedly demonstrates why we owe it to the next generation of labor and employment lawyers to join our Section and participate in its many programs.

Do yourself and your colleagues a favor. Talk to a lawyer or two who is not active and invite them to the January meeting. If they cannot attend the meeting, encourage them to join a committee. Nothing but good will follow. Talk to a law student. Better yet, go to your alma mater and tell them why labor and employment law is a great career. If you haven't been active in the Section, change that. There are many committees anxious to have new and old faces join them. It is all good.

I hope to see you all in New York in January.

Best regards,
Ron Dunn