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New York Family Courts Need Uniform Procedural and Part Rules in Order to Deliver Equitable Access to Justice

Testimony by the New York City Bar Association

New York, November 1, 2023 – The New York City Bar Association is [calling](#) on Court leaders to enact uniform procedural and part rules for both in-person and remote proceedings in Family Court.

At a hearing on the New York State Family Court held jointly by the New York State Senate Committees on the Judiciary and on Children and Families, the City Bar stated that “one of the only courts that does not have procedural rules is the Family Court, statewide. This has a tremendous negative impact on litigants because procedure differs in most of the more than 100 Family Court parts of the New York City Family Courts alone.”

New York’s Family Court has come under increased scrutiny since [Secretary Jeh Johnson’s 2020 report](#) characterizing it as part of “a second-class system of justice for people of color in New York State.” In a [follow-up report](#) this summer, the City Bar made several recommendations for improving high-volume courts – particularly New York City’s Family Court, Housing Court, Civil Court and Criminal Court.

Today’s testimony focused on enacting uniform procedural and part rules as an example of “common-sense reforms” that require no additional court resources. “Clear rules will help ensure that all litigants and lawyers are treated fairly and equitably regardless of which courtroom their case is assigned to,” according to the testimony.

The testimony was delivered by **Michael D. Weinstein**, Chair of City Bar's Family Court and Family Law Committee, and **Rene Kathawala**, Co-Chair of the City Bar Working Group on Racial Equity in NYS Courts, who closed with an appeal for the court system “to provide clear, public-facing information regarding implementation efforts, monitoring, and how stakeholders can regularly provide input as part of the process” to improve the Family Court.

About the Association

The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has over 23,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world.
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