

Tuesday  
October 30, 2007  
**DAILY BRIEFING**

**'Court in the Schools' program scheduled**

The Wayne County 24th District Court of Allen Park and Melvindale will hold its "Court in the Schools and Critical Life Choices" program Thursday, November 8, and Thursday, November 29.

The program will take place in the Allen Park High School Auditorium, 18401 Campaign Street from 9 to 10:30 a.m. each day, and is open to the public.

For additional information, call Wayne County 24th District Court Judge John Courtright at (313) 928-0535, extension 256.

**Detroit Economic Club presents Chinese Ambassador to U.S.**

The Detroit Economic Club will present Zhou Wenzhong, People's Republic of China ambassador to the United States, on Tuesday, November 13, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Masonic in Detroit. He will speak on "China-U.S. Economic and Trade Relations: Present and Future."

Cost to attend is \$40 for Detroit Economic Club members, \$50 for guests of members, and \$75 for non-members

Reserve tickets at [www.econclub.org](http://www.econclub.org) or call the Detroit Economic Club at (313) 963-8547.

**Jury to decide how much Detroit owes ticket law violators**

DETROIT (AP) — More than 1,200 people cited since December 2001 for reselling tickets in a restricted area in Detroit will get another day in court.

U.S. District Judge John O'Meara will preside Tuesday over a trial to determine damages. A 12-member jury will be seated to decide how much ticket sellers in a class action will be compensated.

Selling tickets above face value is scalping. And a 2004 ordinance prohibits selling tickets — at any price — within 500 feet of entertainment venues in Detroit.

But O'Meara ruled in January 2006 that the city ordinance was unconstitutional.

Detroit city attorney Edward Keelean tells the Detroit Free Press that the city might appeal the 2006 ruling.

**Fieger's law partner seeks separate trial**

DETROIT (AP) — The law partner of high-profile attorney Geoffrey Fieger says he wants a separate trial on criminal campaign finance charges.

The Detroit News reports that Ven Johnson's lawyer argued in a court filing that his client's chances for a fair trial could be hurt by Fieger's celebrity. The filing says Johnson also could be hurt by Fieger's public comments about the case.

They have been accused of submitting illegal contributions to the 2004 presidential campaign of Democrat John Edwards. Fieger also has been charged with obstructing justice.

Their federal trial could start in December. Fieger also has pushed for separate trials. Fieger's lawyer said in a separate filing that Fieger is the target and Johnson's case would dissolve if Fieger is acquitted.

**University of Michigan endowment grows to \$7.1 billion**

ANN ARBOR (AP) — The University of Michigan's endowment has grown from \$5.7 billion to \$7.1 billion in the 2007 fiscal year.

The Ann Arbor school's chief financial officer, Tim Slottow, says the endowment provides a permanent stream of funds to support educational programs and research.

Michigan says its endowment is now the ninth-largest in the country and third-largest among public universities.

# Detroit Legal News

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## 15 YEARS

### A (Habeas) Chorus Line enjoys performing together

By CHRISTINE L. MOBLEY  
Legal News

What was supposed to be a one-night stand developed into something much more substantial for eight attorneys and a former case manager.

Originally, back in 1992, seven of the nine members comprising "A (Habeas) Chorus Line" (AHCL) joined together for what was to be a one-time engagement for the Detroit chapter of the Federal Bar Association. It developed into much more — after adding two more members to the group AHCL is now celebrating 15 years as a musical parody troupe having begun its 16th season.

The legal eagles that make up AHCL are Brian D. Figot of Stephen M. Landau P.C.; Sara F. Fischer, a former case manager in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan; Justin G. Klimko of Butzel Long; Michael C. Leibson, an assistant U.S. attorney; Joseph M. LaBella of Kitch, Drutchas, Wagner, DeNardis, & Valitutti; Mark R. Lezotte, general counsel of Oakwood Healthcare System; James D. Robb, associate dean and general counsel of Thomas M. Cooley Law School; Angela R.C. Williams, deputy general counsel of the Detroit Housing Commission; and Judy Zorn of The Zorn Law Firm P.L.C.

"At the time we got started, the Broadway show 'A Chorus Line' was still running in its original incarnation," Klimko explained. "When we were first put together we thought it was for a single show so it was the name of the show and not the name of the group."

"When the group did continue we said, 'Let's just use that as the name of our group.'"

With songs that include titles such as "Iraq Around the Clock," "Mr. Saddam," "See Ya Later, Litigator," "I Got Ebay," and other parodies of existing songs and original numbers — one may wonder where the inspiration for AHCL's performances come from.

"Our material is sort of a mix of current events and political things, but also a lot of social type issues and things like that so some of our material is very time sensitive and gets stale really quickly and some of our material has a much longer shelf-life," Klimko, lyricist for the troupe, said.

According to their Web site, "From local issues to national and international events, from judges to lawyers to politicians to celebrities, ACHL is an equal-opportunity lapooner."

The camaraderie among the players translates into their performances. Over the last 15 years, AHCL has performed at various venues throughout Michigan and around the country.

"It's wonderful to watch the skill and success of the group

evolve over time," Robb said. "Sometimes the audiences who haven't seen us don't know what to expect...They're seeing a different side of lawyers that they don't expect. I think they enjoy that and they see that it's a creative outlet for us."

The only non-lawyer in the troupe, Sara F. Fischer, worked for U.S. District Judge Gerald E. Rosen, Eastern District of Michigan for 15 years before being offered an early retirement in 2004.

"It drives my co-habeas nuts because I'm the youngest member of the group and the first to retire," Fischer said.

"When people ask me about working with these legal-minded people for so many years I tell them that, in my experience, being in AHCL is probably the most fun anyone could ever have hanging around with eight lawyers."

The troupe has produced three CDs which are "Electile Dysfunction," "Parody This!," and "Caught In The Act! Live!" The CDs are available through their Web site, [www.habeaschorus.com](http://www.habeaschorus.com), for \$10 each plus tax and shipping and handling. Selections from the CDs may be heard on the Web site.

A (Habeas) Chorus Line's next public performance will be a fund-raiser for Maire School on Saturday, January 26, 2008 at 7 p.m. at Parcels Middle School, 20600 Mack Ave., in Grosse Pointe Woods.

"If you get a chance you should come see us," Klimko said. "It's not what you'd expect and you'll walk out laughing."

A (HABEAS) CHORUS LINE performed on Saturday, October 6, at Berkley High School. Gathering backstage before their entrance are members (seated, left to right) Angela R.C. Williams, deputy general counsel of the Detroit Housing Commission, and Judy Zorn of The Zorn Law Firm; along with (standing, left to right) Mark R. Lezotte, general counsel of Oakwood Health System; Brian D. Figot of Stephen M. Landau P.C.; Sara F. Fischer, a former case manager in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan; Joseph M. LaBella of Kitch, Drutchas, Wagner, DeNardis, & Valitutti; James D. Robb, associate dean and general counsel of Thomas M. Cooley Law School; Justin D. Klimko of Butzel Long; and Michael C. Leibson, an assistant U.S. attorney.  
Photo by John Meiu

**High net worth clients discussed**

THE DETROIT METROPOLITAN BAR ASSOCIATION'S Entertainment and Sports Law Section presented a lunch seminar on "Handling Financial Issues for High Net Worth Clients" on Wednesday, October 10, at the Penobscot Building. The Capstone Group LLC sponsored the program. Capstone wealth advisor Vincent Mastrovito (right) offered practical counsel related to developing and implementing best practices in support of building sound retirement, financial and estate planning strategies, as well as, navigating through the barrage of monetary request high net worth client's face. Welcoming Mastrovito to the lunch was DMBA Deputy Director Angela English (left). To learn more about the DMBA Entertainment & Sports Law Section visit [www.detroitlawyer.org](http://www.detroitlawyer.org). For guidance related to retirement, financial, and estate planning, contact Mastrovito by e-mail at [vmastrovito@capstonepwm.com](mailto:vmastrovito@capstonepwm.com).  
Photo by John Meiu



**Some agreement on children's health insurance, but issues remain**

By KEVIN FREKING  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush and other critics of a \$35 billion spending increase for children's health insurance say they'll support expanding coverage to families of four making as much as \$62,000 a year, but they want to limit states' ability to go beyond that level.

About three dozen states ignore certain income when determining who can get government-subsidized health coverage. For example, many states exclude child support payments. Others deduct expenses for child care when determining who qualifies for the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

Congress is considering the renewal of SCHIP for an additional five years, but differences remain over who the program should cover and how much money should be spent. The flexibility that states have in defining income is one of the differences that will probably need to be resolved for Democrats to override a promised veto from Bush.

At the White House on Monday, spokeswoman Dana Perino said President Bush's negotiators have been meeting with Republican congressional leaders — but not Democrats — about the children's health insurance legislation.

"I think they offered, and I don't think the meeting was accepted," Perino said of the White House's overture to leaders of the Democratic majority. Asked if any meetings with Democrats were planned, she said: "I (See CHILDREN'S HEALTH, Page Two)

**State death penalty systems deeply flawed**

The American Bar Association recently released the findings from their three-year study on state death penalty systems and called for a nationwide moratorium on executions. Based on a detailed analysis of death penalty systems in eight sample states, the ABA Death Penalty Moratorium Implementation Project identified key problems common to the states studied, including major racial disparities, inadequate indigent defense services and irregular clemency review processes — making their death penalty systems operate unfairly.

"After carefully studying the way states across the spectrum handle executions, it has become crystal clear that the process is deeply flawed," said Stephen F. Hanlon, chair of the ABA Death Penalty Moratorium Implementation Project. "The death penalty system is rife with irregularity — supporting the need for a moratorium until states can ensure fairness and accuracy."

While the ABA takes no position for or against the death penalty itself, since 1997 it has urged a moratorium in each jurisdiction that provides for capital punishment until the state conducts a thorough and exhaustive study to determine whether its system meets legal standards for fairness and due process.

For the past three years, teams of local legal experts have assessed their states using 93 protocols developed by the ABA as measuring points of the due process and fairness the state provides. The protocols have not been adopted as ABA policy, but are based on association policies calling for due process and fairness.

Of the eight state teams, five urged their own governmental leaders to impose a temporary halt on executions within the state until more (See ABA STUDY, Page Two)

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