

STATEWIDE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE



Advisory Opinion #13-01708-A General Firm Advertisement

Pursuant to Practice Book §2-28B, the undersigned, duly-appointed reviewing committee of the Statewide Grievance Committee, reviewed a request for an advisory opinion filed on February 4, 2013. The proposed print advertisement will be used for “general branding” in newspapers and flyers and on the firm’s website. The reviewing committee concluded that the advertisement complies with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

The advertisement provides the following information: the name of the law firm accompanied by the phrase “Property Law Firm.” Underneath is the phrase “Your Property is Our Focus” followed by a listing of three practice areas. The names of three attorneys are listed along with the firm’s website address. Underneath are listed ten additional practice areas along with the firm’s address, phone and fax numbers. A trademarked graphic is located on the upper left corner of the proposed advertisement and a “QR code” (Quick Response Code) is placed in the lower right corner which connects to the firm’s URL or website. For purposes of this advisory opinion the firm’s website was not reviewed.

Pursuant to Rule 7.2(i) of the Rules of Professional Conduct, the above referenced information consisting of the firm’s name, attorneys and the firm’s contact information is

presumed not to violate the provisions of Rule 7.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct and therefore is not false or misleading. Furthermore, the fields of law listed in the advertisement also comply with Rules 7.4 and 7.4A of the Rules of Professional Conduct since there is no other language stating or implying specialization or expertise in these areas of law.

The phrase "Property Law Firm" under the firm's name complies with Rules 7.4 and 7.4A since it merely states the type of law that the firm primarily practices and does not imply specialization or expertise. The Connecticut Bar Association ("CBA") in Informal Opinion 93-20 (published July 30, 1993) examined the use of the descriptive phrase "Business Lawyer" on letterhead and found it a permissible statement of the type of law the attorney practices, provided it was not accompanied by other language implying specialization pursuant to Rules 7.4 and 7.4A. Similarly, the phrase "Your Property is Our Focus" does not violate Rule 7.4 and Rule 7.4A of the Rules of Professional Conduct. For more information about advertising practice areas and Rules 7.4 and 7.4A see Advisory Opinions #10-01543-A and #11-01609-A available at http://www.jud.ct.gov/sgc/Adv_opinions/default.htm.

The proposed advertisement is comprised primarily of content that is presumed not to be false or misleading because it is basic information about the firm, such as names, contact information and fields of law. Advertisements that consist only of the basic information listed in Rule 7.2(i) of the Rules of Professional Conduct are one of the listed exemptions from the filing requirements of PB §2-28A. See PB §2-28A(b)(1). The proposed advertisement does contain additional language beyond the basic information listed in Rule 7.2(i), found in the phrase "Your Property is Our Focus," and, therefore, it should be filed with the Statewide Grievance Committee

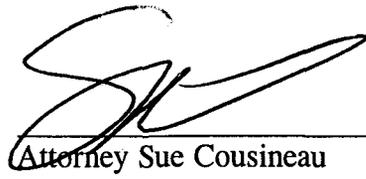
at or around the time of its first dissemination.

Accordingly, this reviewing committee opines that the advertisement complies with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

(E)

ISSUE DATE: February 15, 2013

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