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ILLINOIS STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT LAWYERS

The newsletter of the Illinois State Bar Association's Standing Committee on Government Lawyers

Government lawyers: The case for discounted bar dues

By James W. Chipman

Introduction

write as your new Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Lawyers for 2010-2011. Using our excellent newsletter as a platform, let me share my agenda with you for the current bar year. As the title of this article suggests, a major initiative of mine involves establishing a reduced ISBA membership fee for the public servant lawyer. Before I outline my proposal in detail, a short history lesson is in order.

In March 1999, the ISBA Board of Governors authorized the creation of our committee to recognize the growing number of government lawyers in the profession and to encourage their

active participation in the Association. Then, as now, the government lawyer comprises a large percentage of licensed attorneys employed by a government entity, a legal aid society, or a legal assistance program. The 20 members who made up that first committee held their inaugural meeting in June 1999 with Lynn Patton, an Assistant Attorney General, serving as chair. There is no doubt that over the last 11 years of our existence, the committee has helped influence ISBA policy through discussion and debate of the issues that affect the Illinois legal community.

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The Affirmative Damage Rule

By Kevin Lovellette and Cody Cocanig*

few years ago, I was defending a psychiatric malpractice, wrongful death case before a jury. Opposing counsel subpoenaed one of my client's co-workers as a non-hostile witness because the co-worker's deposition testimony played right into the plaintiff's theory of the case. But, as often happens, the co-worker testified at trial differently than at his deposition, which was a wonderful surprise to me. It was less wonderful for opposing counsel. He grabbed his copy of the deposition and attempted to impeach the co-worker. I immediately objected that he could not impeach his own witness. After a sidebar where we vehemently argued the issue to the amusement of the judge, my objection was overruled. The case proceeded to a verdict in favor of my client, but I was convinced my objection should have been sustained. I was wrong.

Supreme Court Rule 238(a) states, "The credibility of a witness may be attacked by any party, including the party calling the witness."² This Rule originally required the party calling the witness to prove they were surprised by the trial testimony before being able to impeach their own witness.³ Since 1982, the element of surprise has been abolished.⁴ Under current case law, such impeachment can occur when: (1) the trial testimony "affirmatively damages" the impeaching party;⁵ (2) the impeaching statement was "materially inconsistent" with the trial testimony;⁶ (3) the impeaching statement relates to a "material" matter;⁷ and (4) proper foundation is laid for the impeaching material.⁸ The foundation element is beyond the scope of this article because foun-

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(Notice to librarians: The following issues were published in Volume 11 of this newsletter during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010: September, No. 1; December, No. 2; April, No. 3; June, No. 4).

Save the Date!

Ethics for Government Lawyers

November 30, 2010 Chicago

Go to www.isba.org/cle for details and registration information.

Government lawyers: The case for discounted bar dues

Continued from page 1

Given the diverse backgrounds and special talents of our members, the committee will continue to play a key role in shaping the future of the ISBA.

Proposal

I believe the time is right for our association to further represent the government lawyer by structuring reduced membership dues based on the member's admission date to the Illinois bar. There is plenty of precedent to support this proposal. Currently, there are 18 voluntary state bar associations in the country, including Illinois. The other 17 state bars are Arkansas, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Vermont. Over half of these associations offer reduced or discounted dues for the government lawyer using the admission date to calculate an annual fee. I will briefly explain each state bar association's membership category and fee structure.

The Connecticut Bar Association offers a 23% discount in dues for "full-time judges, legal services and government attorneys and law school faculty." In neighboring Indiana, the state bar requires a "resident member admitted to practice more than 6 years" to pay more than twice as much as a "government member" with the same years of experience.

The Kansas Bar Association charges a "regular attorney" admitted in 2004 or before, \$60 more than her government attorney counterpart. In Kansas, a "government employee must be a full-time city, county, state, or federal employee."

The Maine bar has two separate membership categories for the government lawyer— "Judicial Members (members of the Maine and federal judiciary who do not elect to be standard members) and "Public Interest Members." This latter group is made up of attorneys "who are employed full time by a government entity (Federal, State, County, or Municipal); attorneys who are working in a legal services organization; military attorneys; and attorneys, including faculty, employed in a publicly supported law school or university."

In Massachusetts, the bar has established a special category for the government attorney, who must either be a full-time government employee or legislator. Unlike other state bars, the reduced fee remains the same regardless of the member's bar admission date. A "Public Attorney" in Minnesota, provided she is employed exclusively by a government agency full or part-time, is entitled to discounted dues. The New Jersey Bar Association structures its fees based on the attorney's admission date, but discounts them for "government lawyers" and "judges."

Ohio provides "full-time government-employed" attorneys, whether they practice inside or outside of the state, with discounted dues. The attorney "must be employed by a local, state or federal government agency; a legal aid society or non-profit legal assistance program; or a public defender's office" and certify that the position she holds is the only source of earned income.

The Pennsylvania bar prorates a fee schedule based on the admission date of its members for attorneys and "government attorneys" with the government attorney paying about 20 percent less than his private sector colleague.

Finally, the American Bar Association offers reduced dues to "judges and lawyers in government or legal/public service."

The government lawyer qualifies for a special dues reduction in nine state voluntary bar associations and the ABA. The ISBA should follow the lead of the national and state bars and structure a discounted fee rate for the Illinois public servant lawyer. During the upcoming year, the Committee on Government Lawyers will be working on developing a specific discounted fee proposal. We will keep you informed of our efforts on this issue. We also welcome your comments or suggestions with regard to this matter. Please submit your comments to the Committee's staff liaison, Janet Sosin at jsosin"isba.org. ■

The Affirmative Damage Rule

Continued from page 1

dation requirements vary based on the type of inconsistent statement used for impeachment. Instead, we will focus on the first three elements of this test, generally called the Affirmative Damage Rule.

As government lawyers, we will most often come across the Affirmative Damage Rule in criminal matters involving an eyewitness who changes her testimony from a prior statement. But Supreme Court Rule 238 governs both civil and criminal matters, and there should be no difference in the application of this test between the two types of cases.9

1. The Trial Testimony Must "Affirmatively Damage" the Impeaching Party

Impeachment of your own witness through a prior inconsistent statement cannot occur unless you can sufficiently demonstrate that the trial testimony has damaged, rather than merely failed to support, your position.¹⁰ Asking a witness about a fact which would be favorable for you if true but receiving a negative reply does not result in affirmative damage.¹¹ Instead, the testimony must give positive aid to your adversary's case.¹² The policy behind this is simple: no reasonable reason exists to impeach a witness who has not actually contradicted any of your evidence. 13 The law does not allow us to use this impeachment method to present otherwise inadmissible hearsay to the jury. 14 It is only when the witness' testimony is more damaging than his complete failure to testify would have been that impeachment can proceed.15

For example, in the malpractice case referenced at the opening of this article, the client's co-worker testified at trial that she agreed with my client's choice of medication. During the co-worker's deposition, she stated that she disagreed with my client's choice. Her trial testimony caused affirmative damage to my opponent's case because the main thrust of his claims was the failure to properly medicate the plaintiff. In comparison, the co-worker's trial testimony aided my client's case because she asserted that my client's medication orders were appropriate. Opposing counsel would have been in a better situation had he never called the co-worker to testify. Thus, the first element of the Affirmative Damage Rule was met.

2. The Trial Testimony is "Materially Inconsistent" with the Impeaching Statement

The second element requires that the impeaching statement be materially inconsistent with the trial testimony.¹⁶ The inconsistency does not require a direct contradiction, but a tendency to contradict the witness' trial testimony.¹⁷ This determination is within the broad discretion of the trial judge.¹⁸

Applying the materially inconsistent element to our malpractice case, the co-worker stated at trial that she agreed with my client's medication orders, while she testified to the exact opposite during her deposition. The trial testimony has more than just a tendency to contradict the deposition testimony. Therefore, this element of the Affirmative Damage Rule was met.

3. The Evidence Concerns a "Material Matter"

The third element focuses on whether the impeachment evidence is material to the case. ¹⁹ The court looks to whether it is reasonably likely that the testimony would affect the outcome of the case. ²⁰ It is not enough for the evidence to merely help the offering party's position. ²¹ The evidence must be directly on point with the main issue(s) in contention. ²² If the evidence speaks to a collateral matter, it does not meet this element. ²³

This element is the most flexible prong of the test because the materiality of an issue depends directly on the claims being brought before the court. In a criminal case, evidence is considered to be material when it tends to raise a reasonable doubt of the defendant's guilt.²⁴ In civil cases, the materiality of evidence varies widely depending on the exact claims at issue.

In our malpractice example, the main claim against my client was that she placed the plaintiff on the wrong medication. The co-workers' testimony was directly on point with this claim, and if it was left standing without impeachment, the jury could have used it to rule in my client's favor. Thus, this evidence concerned a material matter, and the judge correctly let opposing counsel impeach this witness even though counsel had called her to the stand.

In summary, a party wishing to impeach a witness that it called must prove that the trial testimony damaged its case, the impeaching testimony is inconsistent with the prior statement, and the issue addressed by the testimony is material to the case. The normal foundation rules also apply when impeaching your own witness. The Affirmative Damage Rule gives us the ability to impeach witnesses that we call, thereby limiting the damage done to our case by our own witnesses.

*Kevin Lovellette is an Assistant Illinois Attorney General. He is currently the supervisor of the Prisoner Litigation Unit in the Attorney General's Chicago Office. The opinions expressed in this article are his alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Office of the Illinois Attorney General

Cody Cocanig is a third-year law student at Thomas M. Cooley Law School, and is a Law Clerk with the Illinois Attorney General's Office.

- 1. Yes, I am bragging.
- 2. IL Sup Ct Rule 238(a).
- 3. *People v. Hastings*, 161 III. App. 3d 714, 718 (1st Dist. 1987).
 - 4. ld.
 - 5. People v. Cruz, 162 III. 2d 314, 359 (1994.)
- 6. *Schiff v. Friberg*, 331 III. App. 3d 643, 656 (1st Dist. 2002).
- 7. Chapman v. Hubbard Woods Motors, Inc., 351 Ill. App. 3d 99, 105 (1st Dist. 2004).
- 8. People v. Crowe, 327 III. App. 3d 930, 938 (1st Dist. 2002).
- 9. Compare *Hastings, supra,* (criminal matter involving Affirmative Damage Rule) with *Mueller v. Yellow Cab Co.,* 110 Ill. App. 3d 504 (1st Dist. 1982) (civil matter involving same).
- 10. People v. Amato, 128 III. App. 3d 985, 986-987 (3rd Dist. 1984).
 - 11. Cruz. 162 III. 2d at 360.
- 12. Cruz, 162 III. 2d at 360 (citing Graham, Prior Inconsistent Statements-Impeachment and Substantive Admissibility: An Analysis of the Effect of Adopting the Proposed Illinois Rules of Evidence, 1978 U.III.L.F. 329, 372; see also M. Graham, Cleary & Graham's Handbook of Illinois Evidence § 607.4m at 349 (5th ed. 1990)).
 - 13. Amato, 128 III. App. 3d at 986-987.
 - 14. ld.
- 15. People v. Weaver, 92 III.2d 545, 563-64 (1982).
 - 16. Schiff, 331 Ill. App. 3d at 656.
 - 17. Hastings, 161 III. App. 3d at 719.
 - 18. ld.
 - 19. People v. McLaurin, 184 III. 2d 58, 89 (1998)
 - 20. ld.
 - 21. ld.
 - 22. ld. 23. ld.
 - 24. ld.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT LAWYERS

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Attorney General issues opinions

By Lynn Patton

nder section 4 of the Attorney General Act (15 ILCS 205/4 (West 2008)), the Attorney General is authorized, upon request, to furnish written legal opinions to State officers and State's Attorneys on matters relating to their official duties. The following is a summary of informal opinion Nos. I-10-001 through I-10-008 that may be of interest to the government bar.

Copies of an opinion may be requested by contacting the Opinions Bureau in the Attorney General's Springfield office at (217)782-9070. Copies of official opinions may also be found on the internet at http://www.illinoi- sattorneygeneral.gov/opinions/index.html>.

Informal Opinion No. I-10-001 Issued January 7, 2010

Compatibility of Offices – County Board **Member and Community College District** Trustee

Pursuant to section 1 of the Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act, a county board member may not be elected to hold the office of community college district trustee simultaneously unless specifically authorized to do so by statute. If a county board member, during his or her term of office, is elected to the office of community college district trustee, that election is void under section 1 of the Prohibited Activities Act. 50 ILCS 105/1 (West 2008).

Informal Opinion No. I-10-002 Issued February 5, 2010

Compatibility of Offices -Village Trustee and Community Mental Health Board Member

Because of the potential conflicts in duties, the office of village trustee is incompatible with the office of community mental health board member. 65 ILCS 5/11-29.2-1 (West 2008); 405 ILCS 20/3e (West 2008).

Informal Opinion No. I-10-003 Issued March 11, 2010

Authority to Enact an Ordinance Prohibiting Running at Large of Dogs in Certain Unincorporated Residential Areas

A county board is authorized to regulate and prohibit the running at large of dogs in unincorporated areas of a county which have been subdivided for residential purposes. The decision to enact a leash law that is applicable to one subdivided area but not to another, similarly-situated subdivided area, may survive an equal protection challenge if the county can demonstrate an appropriate reason to treat subdivisions differently. 55 ILCS 5/5-1071 (West 2008).

Informal Opinion No. I-10-005 Issued May 27, 2010

Compatibility of Offices-Township Assessor and Village Trustee

Because of the potentially conflicting duties, the offices of township assessor and village trustees are incompatible, and one person may not hold both offices simultaneously. 35 ILCS 200/15-60, 15-80 (West 2008).

Informal Opinion No. I-10-006 **Issued June 10, 2010**

Compatibility of Offices-County Board Member and City Clerk

Pursuant to section 1 of the Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act, a county board member may not be elected to hold the office of city clerk simultaneously unless specifically authorized to do so by statute. If a county board member, during his or her term of office, is elected to the office of city clerk, that election is void under section 1 of the Prohibited Activities Act. 50 ILCS 105/1 (West 2008).

Informal Opinion No. I-10-007 Issued June 24, 2010

Authority to Levy a Tax to Support a **Downstate Working Cash Fund**

Section 6-29002 of the Downstate County Working Cash Fund Law (the Law) authorizes counties to create a county working cash fund. Nothing in section 6-29003 of the Law, however, authorizes a county board to levy a tax subsequent to 1977 to support the working cash fund. Accordingly, the county board may wish to seek an amendment to section 6-29003 of the Law which authorizes it to levy a tax to support the county working cash fund. 55 ILCS 5/6-29002, 6-29003 (West

Informal Opinion No. I-10-008 Issued July 1, 2010

Payment of Circuit Clerk Salary from Fees Collected in Absence of State Appropriations

Article VI, section 14, of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, which eliminates fee officers in the judicial branch, prohibits circuit clerks from being compensated from fees collected. Accordingly, the proceeds of the Separate Maintenance and Child Support Collection Fund, the Court Automation Fund, and the Court Document Storage Fund may not be used to pay for a salary increase for the circuit clerk. 705 ILCS 105/27.1a(bb)(4), 27.3a, 27.3c (West 2008); III. Const. 1970, art. VI, §14. ■

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In sites

have all heard of Google Earth. But, did you know there are many other resources to find out information about property and facilities? Here are just a few.

From the United States' Environmental Protection Agency you can find out information about the environmental condition from the federal perspective including a property's history with the US EPA, the status of its compliance with environmental laws and the enforcement of environmental laws at the site by visiting the Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) http://www.epa-echo.gov/echo/>.

One source for information on compli-

ance with Illinois environmental laws is COOL – Illinois Pollution Control Board's Clerk's Office On-Line. Clerk's Office On-line http://www.ipcb.state.il.us/cool/external/. A caveat is necessary. This site only lists actions filed with the Illinois Pollution Control Board, whether it be enforcement or permit hearings. It does not provide a complete picture of a property's environmental history. For additional enforcement action information, check with the Circuit Clerk's Office where the property is located. For permit information and status, submit a FOIA to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency http://www.epa.state.il.us/foia/>.

There are various ways to view topo-

graphic information on-line. Try going to The National Map – US Topo at http://www.usgs.gov/. This system contains scanned topographic maps in GeoPDF format. It is touted as being easier to use and share than GIS (geographic information system). Or, try the system GIS portal found at ">http://gos2.geodata.gov/wps/portal/gos>.

To access on-line well and water records for Illinois, go to http://www.isgs.uiuc.edu/maps-data-pub/wwdb/wwdb.shtml. This database is compiled from information submitted by water and well drillers. And, to locate gas and oil well records, go to http://www.isgs.uiuc.edu/maps-data-pub/wwdb/launchims.shtml.

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October

Friday, 10/1/10 - Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Countering Litigation Gamesmanship. Presented by the ISBA General Practice Solo & Small Firm Section, Co -Sponsored by the Federal Civil Practice Section; ISBA Young Lawyers Division and ISBA Civil Practice and Procedure Section, 9-4:45.

Friday, 10/1/10 - Live Webcast—Countering Litigation Gamesmanship. Presented by the ISBA General Practice Solo & Small Firm Section, Co – Sponsored by the Federal Civil Practice Section. 9-5.

Tuesday, 10/5/10- Teleseminar—Pre-Mortem Estate and Trust Disputes. 12-1.

Wednesday, 10/6/10- Webinar—Virtual Magic: Presenting with Excellence Over the Phone/Web (INVITE ONLY/ DO NOT PUBLI-CIZE). Presented by the ISBA. 12-1.

Wednesday, 10/6/10- Webinar—Conducting Legal Research on Fastcase. *An exclusive member benefit provided by ISBA and ISBA Mutual. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association, 12-1.

Wednesday, 10/6/10- Webinar—Virtual Magic: Making Great Legal Presentations Over the Phone/Web (invitation only, don't publicize). Presented by the ISBA. 8-5.

Thursday, 10/7/10- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Boot Camp: Decedent's Estate Administration. Presented by the ISBA Trust and Estates Section, 8:50-4:45.

Thursday, 10/7/10- Teleseminar—Business Torts, Part 1 (July 13 Replay). 12-1.

Friday, 10/7/10-Teleseminar—Business Torts, Part 2 (July 14 Replay). 12-1.

Friday, 10/8/10- Carbondale, Southern Illinois University, Classroom 204—Divorce Basics for Pro Bono Attorneys. Presented by the ISBA Committee on Delivery of Legal Services. 1-4:45. Max 70.

Friday, 10/8/10- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Health Care Reform. Presented by the ISBA Employee Benefits Section; cosponsored by the ISBA Health Care Section. 9-3.

Monday, 10/11/10- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Advanced Worker's Compensation- 2010. Presented by the ISBA Workers' Compensation Section. 9-4:30.

Monday, 10/11/10- Fairview Heights, Four Points Sheraton—Advanced Worker's Compensation- 2010. Presented by the ISBA Workers' Compensation Section. 9-4:30.

Tuesday, 10/12/10- Teleseminar—Basics of Fiduciary Income Tax, Part 1. 12-1.

Wednesday, 10/13/10- Teleseminar— Basics of Fiduciary Income Tax, Part 2.

Thursday, 10/14/10- Webcast—Red Flags from Your Clients' Lives: Pitfalls to Avoid When Drafting Estate Plans. Presented by the ISBA Trust and Estates Section. 12-1. http:// isba.fastcle.com/store/seminar/seminar. php?seminar=5792>.

Friday, 10/15/10-Bloomington, Double Tree—Real Estate Update 2010. Presented by the ISBA Real Estate Section. 9-4:45.

Friday, 10/15/10- Springfield, State**house Inn**—Experts and Litigators on Issues Impacting Children & Custody in Family Law. Presented by the ISBA Family Law Section; co-sponsored by the ISBA Child Law Section. 8:20-5.

Friday, 10/15/10- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Meet the Labor and Employment Experts- 2010. Presented by the ISBA Labor and Employment Section. 8:55-12:45.

Monday, 10/18 - Friday, 10/22/10- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—40 Hour Mediation/Arbitration Training. Master Series Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association and the ISBA Alternative Dispute Resolution Section. 8:30-5:45 each day.

Tuesday, 10/19/10- Teleseminar—2010 American with Disabilities Act Update. 12-1.

Thursday - Saturday, 10/21/10 -

10/23/10 - Springfield, Hilton Hotel—6th Annual Solo & Small Firm Conference. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association.

Friday, 10/22/10- Webinar—Advanced Legal Research on Fastcase. *An exclusive member benefit provided by ISBA and ISBA Mutual. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association. 12-1.

Tuesday, 10/26/10-Teleseminar—Innocent Spouse Defense. 12-1.

Thursday, 10/28/10- Teleseminar— Dangers of Using "Units" in LLC Planning. 12-1.

Thursday, 10/28/10- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Raising the Bar by Promoting Greater Diversity in the Judiciary. Presented by the ISBA Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Law; co-sponsored by the Standing Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity; Standing Committee on Women and the Law; and the Diversity Leadership Council. 12:00-1:30.

Thursday, 10/28/10- Live Webcast— Raising the Bar by Promoting Greater Diversity in the Judiciary. Presented by the ISBA Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Law; co-sponsored by the Standing Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity; Standing Committee on Women and the Law; and the Diversity Leadership Council. 12:00-1:30.

Friday, 10/29/10- Bloomington-Normal, Marriot—Bankruptcy Basics from the Experts. Presented by the ISBA Commercial, Banking and Bankruptcy Council. 8:55-4:15.

Friday, 10/29/10- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Insurance Law: Commercial Coverage Controversies. Presented by the ISBA Insurance Law Section. 8:30-12:30.

November

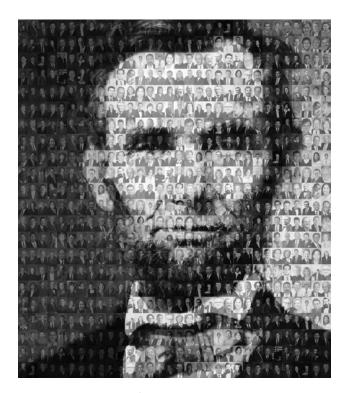
Tuesday, 11/2/10- Teleseminar—Maximizing Tax Benefits in Real Estate, Part 1. 12-1.

Wednesday, 11/3/10- Teleseminar-Maximizing Tax Benefits in Real Estate, Part 2. 12-1. ■

ILLINOIS STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

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