

Re: Corporate Counsel Section (“CCS”) Plans to Merge With Business Law Section (“BLS”) and Carry On Its Longstanding Programs

Dear Members of the Corporate Counsel Section and the Business Law Section:

We are writing as the respective Chairs of CCS and BLS to share an important update about the future of our Sections and what it means for you.

After careful discussion and a lot of thought over the past few years, the Executive Committee of the Corporate Counsel Section unanimously agreed to merge the Section into the Business Law Section of NYSBA. The Executive Committee of the Business Law Section also unanimously supported this initiative. The Corporate Counsel Section will become the Corporate Counsel Committee within the Business Law Section. The merger agreement is on the NYSBA website here: <https://nysba.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Resolution-of-the-Corporate-Counsel-Section-combined-1.pdf>

This was not a decision made lightly by CCS. The Corporate Counsel Section was created to support in-house counsel through programming, professional development, mentorship, networking, and discussion of issues that matter to in-house counsel. That mission has always mattered deeply to us, and it still does. But over time, it became clear that the in-house legal landscape, the needs of CCS’ members, and the way in-house lawyers participate in bar activities have changed a great deal.

CCS also recognized that the Business Law Section shares many of the same goals. It serves attorneys in a wide range of business-focused practice areas and offers continuing legal education, legislative commentary, and networking opportunities that complement our own work. The overlap between the two Sections creates a real opportunity to combine strengths, reduce duplication, and build something more sustainable and useful for members.

The good news is that this merger is designed not to lose what made the Corporate Counsel Section valuable, but to preserve it. The Corporate Counsel Committee will continue to focus on the professional interests of in-house counsel and will remain responsible for programming, publications, and initiatives that reflect our long-standing mission.

Just as important, the surplus funds of the Corporate Counsel Section will be protected and designated to support CCS-originated programs and future Corporate Counsel Committee activities. That includes programs such as:

- The Kenneth G. Standard Internship Program.
- The Jana Behe Fellowship.
- The Biennial Corporate Counsel Institute.
- The Biennial Ethics Program.

- *Inside*, our publication that has long provided useful insights for in-house legal professionals.

The agreement also provides for continued representation and leadership within the Business Law Section. The Corporate Counsel Committee will have leadership appointed in consultation with outgoing CCS leadership, and at least two members of the Committee will serve as voting members of the BLS Executive Committee, including at least one in-house lawyer. That means the voice of in-house counsel will continue to be heard.

For CCS members, this merger offers several real benefits:

- You will remain part of a group focused on in-house counsel, but with the added strength of the broader Business Law Section.
- Your membership will connect you to a wider range of business law programs, resources, and professional opportunities.
- The programs and traditions that matter most to CCS will continue, supported by a stronger structure and preserved financial resources.
- All CCS members will become members of BLS, giving many of you expanded access and added value to choose another Section in addition to BLS as part of your NYSBA membership.
- The merger creates a more efficient and sustainable way to serve our members going forward.

For BLS members, creating a Corporate Counsel Committee in the Business Law Section will add to the robust committee and programming offerings that are already available to our members. BLS leadership plans to build on the recent history of highly successful joint programming with CCS, and to capitalize on the obvious and strong synergies between our two memberships. The proposed merger of CCS into BLS was supported enthusiastically and unanimously by the BLS Executive Committee precisely because it was viewed as a win-win situation that would benefit both the CCS membership and the BLS membership.

We also want to be clear that this transition will be handled carefully. Under the association bylaws, dissolution of the Corporate Counsel Section needs approval by the House of Delegates. The Sections have agreed to take all reasonable steps to make the change as smooth as possible, including updates to governance documents and coordination with NYSBA staff.

This has been a difficult decision for many of us who have participated in the leadership of CCS. The Corporate Counsel Section has been a professional home for a great many members over the years, and we are proud of what it has accomplished. But we believe this merger gives CCS the best opportunity to preserve that legacy while better serving members in the years ahead.

If you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Liz at elizabeth@shampnoiadr.com or David at dgoldstein@certilmanbalin.com.

Thank you for your continued support, and for all you have done to strengthen this Section.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth J. Shampnoi
Chair, Corporate Counsel Section

David A. Goldstein
Chair, Business Law Section