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Massachusetts Bar Association survey about the recession’s impact on the legal profession reveals concerns among attorneys

BOSTON, Mass.—Of the hundreds of the Massachusetts Bar Association members who took part in an online survey about the economy and the legal profession, more than three-quarters believe they will be affected and the field will suffer for a period of time.

The Massachusetts Bar Association in December e-mailed the survey to its members across the state. The 13-question survey focuses on how the current economic climate is affecting lawyers’ practices, and is modeled after a national survey administered by the American Bar Association last fall.

Some results of the MBA survey include:

- 78.5 percent of those who responded think the entire legal profession will be affected by the recession;
- 73.2 percent thinks that the legal field will continue to be rocky for a while;
- 48.6 percent of the respondents expect to earn less in 2009 than they did in 2008;
- 46.6 percent of responding members point the finger at financial institutions for causing the financial recession; and
- 51.3 percent of the legal professionals think the current downturn will not end until 2010, while more than 18.2 percent believes it will continue into 2011.

Most of the MBA survey respondents have been practicing law for more than 20 years, practice in Middlesex, Suffolk and Essex counties and make an annual salary of between $100,000 and $200,000. Just more than one-half of the survey takers work for a firm employing less than 25 attorneys, while just over 30 percent of the respondents are solo practitioners.

Incorporated in 1911, the Massachusetts Bar Association is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence and respect for the law. The MBA represents a diverse group of attorneys, judges and legal professionals across the commonwealth.

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