



**Lippes
Mathias**
Wexler Friedman LLP

54 State Street
Suite 1001
Albany, NY 12207
Phone: 518.462.0110
Fax: 518.462.5260
lippes.com

Your Attorneys

We have been asked, as part of the sector training, to provide a section describing our firm. Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman (“LMWF”) is a law firm of more than 100 attorneys with offices located in downtown Buffalo, Albany, New York, Jacksonville, Florida and Washington, D.C. While the firm represents a diverse clientele, LMWF’s greatest assets are its public sector labor and employment law, governmental relations and litigation practice areas. The attorneys of the Albany office spend almost all of their time working on NYSCOPBA matters. We are proud of the fact that many of our Albany office attorneys have been with NYSCOPBA since its certification as the bargaining agent for the Security Services Unit on May 24, 1999. Because of our more than 20 years of experience and historical knowledge, we are well aware of the issues and challenges facing your members. We take tremendous pride in providing aggressive representation and implementing a comprehensive team approach to the many difficult issues affecting your diversified unit and members.

Your attorneys at LMWF have been responsible for case law and landmark decisions which have impacted, literally, every public employee in the State of New York. Further, many of the victories won by our attorneys have been cited in courts across the country and have impacted employees, in both the public and private sector, in virtually every state in the nation.¹

Representing NYSCOPBA requires incredible flexibility and responsiveness. We are routinely required to appear at Departmental interrogations in Albany, Buffalo, Utica and Long Island City, sometimes with no advance notice. We understand that NYSCOPBA’s members work in agencies and institutions that operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and that when the need arises, NYSCOPBA’s Executive Board members, stewards and even members need and expect to be able to reach an attorney 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We appreciate that it is essential to NYSCOPBA’s relationship with its members to be able to provide representation under such circumstances.

As more fully described in the steward training materials, we are intimately involved in contract enforcement, disciplinary representation and prosecuting Taylor Law violations. Additionally, we litigate matters on behalf of NYSCOPBA’s members and provide NYSCOPBA with corporate counsel related to matters involving corporate governance, internal organization and business affairs. We also assist members with retirement matters. We provide representation to members in disability retirement hearings and litigate denials of benefits when requested to do so by NYSCOPBA.

Another key component of our firm’s services is governmental relations representation. In this capacity, we act as legislative counsel and chief lobbyist. We work with NYSCOPBA’s Executive Board, Legislative/PAC Committee and Legislative Department to implement the

¹ For example, *Fountain v. NYS DOCS*, 2005 WL 1502146 (NDNY 2005), striking down, as a violation of the ADA, DOCS’ policy requiring employees to disclose their medical diagnosis after a brief absence from work.

Union's legislative agenda. This implementation requires that we perform many functions, such as drafting legislation and accompanying Sponsor's Memoranda, targeting legislative sponsors for bill introduction, sheparding bills through the legislative process, and working with the Governor's Office to obtain Chapters for those bills that have passed both houses, among other functions. The specific issues to be addressed legislatively that encompass the Union's agenda, however, come from NYSCOPBA, the Executive Board, the Executive Assembly and the general members of the Union.

LMWF is uniquely qualified to provide representation to NYSCOPBA and its approximately 21,000 members throughout the State of New York. The experience of our attorneys, the areas of law in which we practice, and our broad reach across New York State are all essential elements to providing the representation which NYSCOPBA and its members deserve and which they have come to expect. We are in close proximity to all three branches of New York State's government. We are within walking distance of New York State's Supreme Court, its Appellate Division, Third Department and the Court of Appeals, as well as the United States District Court for the Northern and Western Districts of New York. We are also within walking distance of the State's Capitol building, the Legislative Office Building and Executive Chamber.

Our dual New York locations also allow us easy and expeditious access to all of the areas where NYSCOPBA's members work and live. On any given day, it is not unusual for us to have an attorney representing a member in New York City, another representing a member in Watertown and a third providing representation in Buffalo.

Our attorneys meet regularly with representatives of the Governor's Office of Employee Relations and are within minutes of the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision's Central Office, the Central Office of the Office of Mental Health, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, the New York State Public Employment Relations Board, the Department of Civil Service, the Office of the Comptroller, the Office of the State Attorney General and the central offices of all of the other agencies employing NYSCOPBA's members. We are known and respected by the representatives of these agencies. As a result, we are able to quickly identify and interact with the appropriate agencies and officials to resolve issues and advance NYSCOPBA's interests.

While our firm's institutional knowledge, performance and history are well known to NYSCOPBA, it is worth noting that our firm is unique in its ability to state that we have proven ourselves to be able to provide NYSCOPBA and its members with the expertise, attention, focus and stability that is needed, expected and deserved. Furthermore, many of LMWF's attorneys focus solely on the firm's practice in representation of unions, their members and individual employees regarding labor and employment issues. LMWF has no current clients whose interests conflict with NYSCOPBA. We would not take on any client or representation that we might reasonably anticipate would conflict with the interests of NYSCOPBA.

We take tremendous pride in our representation of NYSCOPBA and look forward to continuing to do so in the future.

We hope these training materials are helpful and, if you have any questions, please feel free to call us.



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whatever your legal needs.**

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**Lippes
Mathias**
Wexler Friedman LLP

BUFFALO | 50 FOUNTAIN PLAZA, SUITE 1700 • BUFFALO, NY 14203 • 716.853.5100

ALBANY | 54 STATE ST., SUITE 1001 • ALBANY, NY 12207 • 518.462.0110

NEW YORK CITY | 415 MADISON AVE, 14TH FLOOR • NEW YORK, NY 10017 • 646.673.863

TORONTO AREA | 1100 BURLOAK DRIVE, SUITE 300 • BURLINGTON, ON L7L 6B2 • 905.319.8964

lippes.com