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RI Bar's Diversity & Inclusion Task Force Releases Revealing Survey

Rhode Island Bar Association Task Force Survey: Almost Half of Respondents Experienced Discrimination at Work, in Court

According to a recent survey by the Rhode Island Bar Association Diversity & Inclusion Task Force, nearly half of the bar members who responded (47 percent) said they had experienced discrimination, including racism, sexism, homophobia and bias due to a disability. Experiences shared by respondents included lawyers of color being mistaken for defendants or court staff by judges in criminal cases; sexual harassment of female lawyers by judges, colleagues, and other lawyers; disparaging comments toward LGBTQ+ lawyers; and the sense that the Rhode Island legal community is an "old boys' club." The task force was created in August 2020 in response to calls for increased national and statewide focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including within the justice system. [The Providence Journal](#) has more details, including the task force's recommendations for both the bar and the state Supreme Court.

Spurred by Tom Girardi Scandal, State Bar of California Board Considers Rule Changes for Client Trust Accounts

As the latest in several repercussions of the scandal involving lawyer Tom Girardi, last week, the State Bar of California Board of Trustees was expected to consider changes to rules for how lawyers manage client trust accounts. Girardi, who was stripped of his license and now faces disbarment, allegedly misappropriated client funds, including a \$2 million settlement, and used personal connections to evade discipline. A special committee created by the board in response to the alleged misconduct recommended that lawyers be required to report details about client trust accounts every time they renew their license and that the accounts be subject to compliance reviews by certified public accountants. The committee's report said the current system misses a lot of problems because it relies on complaints by clients, who don't always know if their funds are being mismanaged. When would any new rules be voted on, and when could they take effect? Find out at [Reuters](#).

How Has COVID-19 Affected Bar Exam Pass Rates, Multistate Bar Exam Scores?

In many jurisdictions, bar exam pass rates dropped in July 2021 compared with the 2020 equivalent (rescheduled from July to fall in many states), and some law school professors and deans predict another decrease in July 2022. Why? By that time, most candidates will have experienced at least half of their legal education during the pandemic, which has involved remote learning, isolation, anxiety, and exhaustion. Meanwhile, the National Conference of Bar Examiners says 2020 was so disrupted that pass rate data from last year can't be accurately compared with data from either 2021 or 2019. How do the July 2021 pass rates compare with those in July 2019, and did the national mean scaled score on the Multistate Bar Exam increase or decrease? [ABA Journal](#) shares figures from NCBE and other sources.

No More Yelling: To Retain Top Talent, Law Firm Partners Build Less Fear-Based Culture

If the yelling, screaming law firm partner was ever effective in helping associates do their best work, those days may be over. At a time when younger lawyers are increasingly mobile and selective about where they choose to work, what will encourage them to join a particular firm, be productive there, and stay? A management style that's not based on fear, some legal workplace experts say: Today's associates want to know that not every project is urgent enough to work on a Sunday, for example, and they want to receive feedback more regularly rather than during an anxiety-provoking annual review. [The American Lawyer](#) talks with several partners about how they're building a workplace culture that's different from what they experienced as associates.

November-December 2021 Bar Leader: How Some Bars Partner with Other Organizations to Address Community Needs

COVID-19 has paused a lot of things, but it hasn't stopped other crises from occurring? some spurred by the pandemic, and others completely unrelated. Now more than ever, a bar's best approach may not be to develop programs on its own to respond to community needs, but instead to draw from some existing relationships and build new ones. The [November-December 2021 issue of Bar Leader](#) looks at how some bars are partnering with other organizations in their area to share resources and help their communities together.

Bar Leader Weekly will be on hiatus next week. The next issue will be on Wednesday, December 8.



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