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Changes to Arizona's Bar Disciplinary System

New Law: If State Bar of Arizona Loses Disciplinary Case, It Must Pay Attorney Fees, Other Costs

Last week, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey signed a bill that says that if the State Bar of Arizona seeks to discipline a lawyer but loses its case, the bar must pay attorney fees and other costs. The bill was introduced by state Sen. Vince Leach (R-District 11) after Democratic Secretary of State Katie Hobbs filed a disciplinary complaint against Republican Attorney General Mark Brnovich for alleged ethics breaches in cases related to the 2020 election. Leach said Hobbs was using the bar disciplinary system as a political weapon. Joel England, the bar's executive director, told lawmakers that the small number of disciplinary cases overall showed that the system had not been weaponized. [U.S. News & World Report](#) has more details, including some provisions that were stripped from the original bill.

Texas Attorney General Is Sued by State Bar of Texas for Professional Misconduct, Announces He Is Suing Texas Bar Foundation for Funding Illegal Immigration

A few hours after divulging that the State Bar of Texas was suing him for professional misconduct related to his lawsuit challenging 2020 presidential election results, state Attorney General Ken Paxton announced that he is suing the Texas Bar Foundation for donating money to groups that "encourage, participate in, and fund illegal immigration at the Texas-Mexico border." Paxton, who is seeking a third term in an election later this month, said state bar investigators are biased and noted that the decision to sue him was announced one week before early voting in his Republican runoff for attorney general. The investigation into Paxton was set in motion in July 2020, when 16 lawyers, including four past state bar presidents, filed an ethics complaint over a pattern of alleged misconduct, including his federal lawsuit challenging the election results. [Texas Tribune](#) shares more information, including statements by State Bar of Texas President Sylvia Borunda Firth and Texas Bar Foundation Chair-Elect Alistair Dawson.

Will the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar Allow Test-Optional Admissions?

Last month, the strategic review committee of the council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar wrote a memo that recommended cutting most of the language in Standard 503 for ABA-accredited law schools. This standard currently requires law schools to use an admissions test; the committee suggested noting that law schools "may use" an admissions test and requiring that law school admissions policies indicate which tests they accept. This follows a vote by the council in 2021 to allow accredited law schools to accept the GRE as well as the LSAT in admissions. How likely is it that the council will move toward allowing test-optional admissions policies? Learn more at [ABA Journal](#).

Oregon Public Defenders System Is Overburdened, in Crisis, Many Say

The public defender system in Oregon is now so overburdened that at any time, several hundred defendants are without legal representation. In response, some judges have

dismissed cases, others have threatened to hold the state public defender's office in contempt for failing to provide lawyers for indigent defendants, and the American Civil Liberties Union is considering a lawsuit. Unlike in any other state, Oregon's public defender system relies entirely on contracted services from nonprofit defense firms, groups of lawyers, or independent attorneys. [ABA Journal](#) highlights some statistics that help show the scope of this problem.

May-June 2022 Issue of *Bar Leader* Looks at Rural Access to Justice, Effects of Great Resignation on Bars

What are some of the most common barriers to access to justice in rural areas, and how can they be overcome? The [May-June 2022 issue of *Bar Leader*](#) looks at some recent efforts by the Legal Services Corporation, the National Center for State Courts, bars, and others to address this need. Also in this issue: how bars are being affected by the Great Resignation, and coverage of the ABA Bar Leadership Institute and ABA Day.



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