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Changes to the Judicial Code of Ethics in California?

California Supreme Court Considers Letting Judges Speak About Some Decisions

Typically, the judicial code of ethics prevents judges from speaking publicly about pending cases. But does that leave them defenseless against criticisms and demands that they lose their jobs? Until December 2, the California Supreme Court is seeking public comment on an amendment that would allow judges to speak out if they are criticized about a decision at a time when they are up for reelection or facing a recall campaign. The proposed exception to the judicial election rules, and how it relates to controversial decisions such as the sentencing of convicted rapist Brock Turner, were discussed last week at a meeting of the Alliance of California Judges. [Courthouse News Service](#) has more details, including what some have said in favor of the amendment and the concerns that others have raised.

Oregon State Bar Faces Constitutional Challenge, Says Janus Does Not Pertain to Bars

In a case that is strikingly similar to ones in recent months involving other mandatory bars, the Oregon State Bar is facing a constitutional challenge to the state's requirement that lawyers pay membership fees to the organization. Earlier this month, the bar's lawyers filed a brief with a U.S. appeals court contending that the U.S. Supreme Court's *Janus* decision is not relevant, and does not overrule a previous decision in the bar's favor, because bars serve a different purpose from that of unions. Learn more at [Reuters.com](#).

Ohio State Bar Association: Tax Amendment Repealed, But Stay Vigilant

The Ohio State Bar Association's lobbying efforts, along with individual members' willingness to contact their local legislators, helped bring about the reversal of a budget amendment that would have increased taxes for many Ohio lawyers, starting in 2020. The amendment, which was repealed on November 7, said that lobbyists and lawyers would no longer be able to claim the state business income deduction. Those claiming the deduction will now have to provide the tax department with information about their occupation, as the state General Assembly wants to learn who benefits from the deduction and how it affects the economy. A [news item on the OSBA website](#) says the bar remains on "high alert;" what other tax changes could be on the horizon for lawyers?

100+ Ways for Lawyers to Gain Technology Competence

As more states adopt the duty of technology competence, a persistent question for many lawyers is exactly how they can increase their knowledge and skill in this area. Legal technology expert Robert Ambrogi asked this question on Twitter and got more than 100 pieces of advice, including: Focus on Word, Excel and other commonly used tools rather than thinking that every lawyer must learn to code; take one thing that is "broken" in your practice, fix it, and move on to the next; and be curious and just start from where you are. At his [LawSites blog](#), Ambrogi gathers every response he received, offering an interesting glimpse of what lawyers and tech experts consider important to know and how best to learn it.

Don't Forget! December 2 Board Catalyst Helps You 'Declutter' Your Bar

We're heading toward a time of year that, to many of us, can feel a bit overstuffed. Bar organizations, too, can suffer from this problem of simply having too much, as new programs are added and old ones are retained. Take a deep breath and get ready to learn from association expert Elizabeth Derrico how to evaluate everything your bar does, freshen things up, and let go of old programs that aren't needed anymore. [Register today](#) for the December 2 Board Catalyst webinar "Sparking Joy: Cleaning out a Bar's Cluttered Closet," and check out what's coming up next.



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