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How Should In-Person Court Proceedings Resume?

New York State Bar Association Commission Shares Guidance, Checklists Toward Safe In-Person Court Reopening

In-person court proceedings, including grand juries and jury trials, eventually will resume? and it may be while the COVID-19 pandemic is still active. But under what conditions should that happen, and how? A report issued last week by the New York State Bar Association Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts offers step-by-step guidance and checklists to help create customized plans that prioritize public health and safety. [New York Law Journal](#) has more information about this report and about the other topics the commission is exploring.

Should Washington State's Limited License Legal Technician Program Be Restored?

When it decided in June to eliminate the Limited License Legal Technician program, the Washington Supreme Court cited the program's low participation and high cost for the Washington State Bar Association to run. But how solid are those reasons, given that the program was intended to serve low-income clients yet not allowed to expand into areas of law that those clients often need most? An article at [Above the Law](#) raises this question and highlights a recent *Seattle Times* editorial urging that the program be reinstated.

Amicus Brief: State Bar of Texas Dues Are Constitutional, Bar Has Direct Interest in Some Legislation

Last month, in the ongoing case *McDonald v. Sorrels*, five lawyers who specialize in legal ethics and discipline told the U.S. Fifth Circuit that mandatory dues for the State Bar of Texas are constitutional. Last May, the court held that the fees don't compel speech or association, but this has been appealed, with oral argument set for September 1. In their amicus brief, the five lawyers wrote that bars have a direct, appropriate interest in monitoring and perhaps influencing legislation that may affect lawyer discipline and the quality of legal services. What did Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton write in an earlier amicus brief? Find out at [Bloomberg Law](#).

Most Recent Report from ABA Free Legal Answers Shows Increased Use During COVID-19

Since its launch in 2016, a total of 117,704 civil legal questions have been submitted to ABA Free Legal Answers, to be answered by pro bono attorneys in income-eligible clients' own states. Perhaps not surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought an increase in traffic to the online virtual legal clinic sponsored by the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. July alone saw an increase of nearly 50 percent in the number of questions submitted, compared with the same period in 2019, with a larger increase for three states hit hard by the pandemic. The clinic's [July 2020 report](#) offers infographics and text that give a compelling snapshot of the clinic overall and of its service during COVID-19.

ABA President to President of Conference of Chief Justices: Develop National Strategy for Bar Exams, Lawyer Licensing

Following up on the August 4 ABA House of Delegates vote to approve a resolution regarding in-person bar exams during COVID-19, on August 6, ABA President Patricia Lee Refo sent a letter to Hon. Nathan L. Hecht, president of the Conference of Chief Justices. In the letter, Refo asked the CCJ to develop a national strategy for bar exams and lawyer licensing for those graduating from law school during COVID-19. This national strategy, she wrote, should urge jurisdictions to cancel in-person bar exams during the pandemic unless they can be administered safely; establish temporary measures for licensing recent law school graduates and other bar applicants; and enact certain practices with respect to administering remote bar exams. What does [the letter](#) say is at stake if a national strategy is not established?



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