

Is this email not displaying correctly? [View In Browser](#)



**Issue 224 | October 7**

## **Minnesota to Pilot Legal Paraprofessional Program**

### **Minnesota Becomes Most Recent State to Pilot Legal Paraprofessional Program**

Last week, the Minnesota Supreme Court issued an order to approve a pilot project allowing "legal paraprofessionals" to provide legal services in landlord-tenant disputes and family law. In some jurisdictions, the paraprofessionals will be able to appear in court on behalf of tenants in housing disputes. They will also be able to go to court in some family law matters and handle family law mediations in matters that have limited complexity. The order requires each paraprofessional to enter into an agreement with a licensed Minnesota attorney who will have a supervisory role. When will the pilot project begin and end, and how does it compare with similar programs in other states? Find out at [ABA Journal](#).

### **Lawyer Mental Health: What Does It Take to Help Someone, and What Role Does the ADA Play in Bar Admissions?**

What's one simple way to reach out to a lawyer who may be suffering from a mental health issue or substance abuse problem? Follow the "two-ask rule": If you ask how someone is, and they answer, "Fine," ask, "How are you really?" Through lawyer assistance programs and with accommodations at their firms, there is help available for attorneys and for law students?but it requires being direct and open about what the problem is and what can make things better. That's according to a panel of lawyers who recently led a webinar on the subject of lawyer well-being, workplace accommodations, stigma, and the importance of caring about one another. [Daily Business Review](#) shares more insights from their candid discussion. Also on the subject of mental health and the legal profession, a prospective Illinois lawyer who was rejected by a character and fitness committee in 2018 has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to clarify whether the Americans with Disabilities Act applies in his case. While the committee was reviewing Thomas Skelton's application, he sent a series of unusual, accusatory emails to a committee member and staff members. Skelton was subsequently diagnosed with and treated for a delusional disorder and sought conditional admission, whose requirements would have included ongoing mental health treatment. What do some experts have to say about Skelton's case and about the broader questions it raises? Learn more at [Law360](#).

### **State Bar of Texas President Shares Diversity and Inclusion Plan After Controversial Comments**

In the aftermath of a controversy caused by his social media comments that many found to be racist or otherwise inflammatory, State Bar of Texas President Larry McDougal says he attended an event that helped open his eyes: a discussion in which people of all different backgrounds could openly discuss race and racism. This event was through a partnership between the Dallas Bar Association and a nonprofit called Project Unity; at the state bar's most recent board meeting, McDougal announced that he plans to emulate this program and offer similar discussions in all of Texas's 17 districts through the end of June 2021. Also part of the plan to heal divisions caused by his comments are some specific steps to help address racial inequality and promote inclusion within the bar. [Texas Lawyer](#) has more details.

## New Jersey State Bar Association Praised for Its Guidance on Law Firm Reopenings

To help law firms of all sizes consider when and how to safely reopen their offices, the New Jersey State Bar Association, through its Pandemic Task Force Committee on Law Firm Opening and Operations, has compiled information and resources [on its website](#). Recently, the editorial board of the *New Jersey Law Journal* praised the bar for its careful, comprehensive work. In [a column for the Journal](#), the editorial board gives an overview of the bar's online resources and its ongoing efforts to help New Jersey lawyers navigate "a health and economic crisis whose end is unknown."



---

[Learn more about the ABA Division for Bar Services](#)

[Read the latest issue of Bar Leader Magazine](#)



This message was sent to  
michael.ward@AMERICANBAR.ORG.  
Your e-mail address will only be used within the ABA.  
We do not sell or rent e-mail addresses.

**American Bar Association**  
321 N Clark, Chicago, IL 60654-7598  
800-285-2221 | 312-988-5522

[Update profile](#)

[E-mail preferences](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Contact Us](#)