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Bar Statements Denounce Violence at the U.S. Capitol

ABA, Bars Across the Country Make Statements Denouncing Capitol Violence, Affirming Rule of Law

After the violent disruption of the Electoral College ballot certification process at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, many bars and their leaders issued statements condemning this activity and upholding the rule of law. "Storming the Capitol and disrupting the procedure of counting is not a peaceful protest," [wrote ABA President Patricia Lee Refo](#). "It is criminal conduct." Refo highlighted the importance of a peaceful transition of power and called on President Trump and other elected officials to condemn the violence, demand that it stop, and uphold their oath to defend the Constitution. Aurora Austriaco, president of the National Conference of Bar Presidents, echoed Refo's statement and noted that NCBP is proud to support other bars that have issued their own statements. [Austriaco's statement on behalf of NCBP](#) also includes links to 20 others made by bars across the country. The National Association of Bar Executives has compiled its own [list of bars that have made statements](#); any bars that wish to be added should [email Rachel Rojas-Brennan](#).

Recent Merger of Fastcase and Casemaker: What Will It Mean?

Longtime competitors Fastcase and Casemaker officially merged on January 1, creating a single online legal research company with an estimated subscriber base of more than three quarters of all lawyers in the United States. Throughout their years of rivalry (which included a protracted copyright lawsuit), the two companies vied for business from bars looking to provide legal research as a member benefit. The combined company, under the Fastcase brand, will serve more than 1 million lawyers from state bars in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as almost 50 local and special-focus bars. Will subscribers notice immediate changes, what will the merger entail for the companies' employees and boards, and how could this affect Thomson Reuters and LexisNexis? Find out at [LawSites](#).

National Conference of Bar Examiners Task Force: Bar Exam Should Be Online, Scenario-Based

In the ongoing discussion of whether changes are needed in how bar exams are structured and delivered, it's often been noted that the National Conference of Bar Examiners had a task force looking into this same subject. Last week brought the long-anticipated news that this task force has released its preliminary recommendations. Most notably, the task force recommended that future bar exams be given online and as an integrated test involving a set of scenarios, rather than in discrete sections with widely varying formats. What other changes did the NCBE task force recommend, when will the NCBE board of trustees vote on them, and how soon after that could any approved changes be implemented? [ABA Journal](#) has more information, as well as a link to an overview of the recommendations.

New York State Working Group Passes on Sandbox Idea for Now, Draws Criticism

Alternative business structures for law firms should not be considered in New York state now?but the "sandbox" idea should be reconsidered if current experiments in Utah,

California, and Arizona prove successful. That was one conclusion of a working group established by the Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts to study the use of regulatory reforms to increase access to justice. In a report released last month, the working group recommended training and certifying social workers to provide certain legal services and expanding an existing "court navigators" program to help pro se litigants understand the system. However, the group found there was no conclusive evidence that alternative business structures and nonlawyer ownership help increase access to justice. But some critics say this report amounts to "a Band-Aid on a broken leg" and note that New York is hanging back as other, bolder states do the testing that might produce the data the working group found lacking. Read more about this report, and its mixed reception, at [New York Law Journal](#).

4 Ways Face-to-Face Is Better than Virtual, and 5 Ways to Make the Most of It

While it's unclear when life will begin to get back to normal after the pandemic, what is increasingly clear is that it won't be quite the same: Most people seem to agree that some of the virtual technology we've all been using is here to stay. But business professors Robert Hooijberg and Michael D. Watkins believe face-to-face interaction will be reincorporated and used widely once it's safe to do so, because it is better at fostering four important dimensions among teams: collaboration, innovation, acculturation, and dedication. At [Harvard Business Review](#), Hooijberg and Watkins explain these four dimensions and five "design drivers" that can help maximize the power of meeting face to face.

2020 State and Local Bar Benchmarks Survey: Membership Update Now Available

Great news! The 2020 State and Local Bar Benchmarks Survey: Membership Update is now available from the ABA Division for Bar Services. More than 140 state and local bars participated in this survey, providing data on membership trends, member dues/fees and member benefits. Use the information to bring your officers and boards up to speed on trends and compare your bar with its peers. [Order your copy today](#), and don't forget: If your bar participated in the survey, you're eligible for a 40 percent discount. All respondents received a discount code; if you need yours to be sent again, please [email Joanne O'Reilly](#). As an additional thank-you, next month, all respondents will receive a complimentary visual report of the most compelling findings from the 2020 Benchmarks Survey.



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