



Issue 283 | January 19

## Alternative Admission in Oregon

### Bar Exam News: Oregon Takes Step Toward Alternative Admission, Omicron May Prompt Exam Delays in Some States, NCBE Says New Exam On Track for 2026

Last week, the Oregon Supreme Court "approved in concept" two proposals by the Oregon State Bar: one that would allow law school graduates to become licensed after 1,000 to 1,500 hours of attorney-supervised practice, and another under which Oregon law students would spend their 2L and 3L years completing practice-based coursework. How do these proposals compare with the alternative pathways offered by two other states, and what is the next step toward possible approval by the court? Find out at [Reuters](#). Also last week, the National Conference of Bar Examiners warned that some states may need to delay their February 2022 bar exam until March because of the COVID-19 omicron variant. States that use NCBE's exam software provider, ExamSoft, will not have the option to keep the February date but switch to remote testing because deadlines established by the provider have passed. [Bloomberg Law](#) looks at options that some states are considering. In other news from NCBE, officials say that the conference is on track to pilot its revamped bar exam in 2026 and will be ready in the first quarter of 2022 to divulge what knowledge and skills the new exam will assess. [Reuters](#) has more information about NCBE's progress toward what it calls the "Next Gen Bar Exam."

### Michigan Supreme Court Establishes Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission; Two Justices Dissent

Earlier this month, in a 5-2 decision, the Michigan Supreme Court adopted an administrative order creating a diversity, equity and inclusion commission to gather information and work with stakeholders in underrepresented populations directly affected by the justice system. One dissenting justice said the way to ensure DEI in the justice system was to stop taking account of race, ethnicity and other protected characteristics because this can be divisive and cause the public to doubt the court's impartiality; the other said there were flaws in the order, including failure to sufficiently define what it meant by "diversity," "equity," and "inclusion." The new commission's focus is similar to but separate from that of a DEI committee established in January 2021 by the Michigan Supreme Court and the State Court Administrative Office. Learn more about the commission and about the dissenting views at [MLive](#).

### In Latest *McDonald* Development, State Bar of Texas Files Conditional Cross-Petition with U.S. Supreme Court

In response to a petition for writ of certiorari filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in November by plaintiffs in *McDonald v. Longley*, the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas has now filed a conditional cross-petition. The bar argues that the plaintiffs' petition should be denied, but that if it is granted, the court should consider whether the mandatory bar is a government agency for purposes of the government speech doctrine and not subject to scrutiny under the First Amendment's Free Speech Clause. *McDonald* is one of several First Amendment cases against mandatory bars in recent years; [Texas Bar Blog](#) has more information as well as a link to all the filings in the case and a summary of similar cases against other mandatory bars.

## **ABA Launches Pro Bono Campaign to Help with Families' Immigration Cases in 11 U.S. Cities**

In response to a "dedicated docket" process established in May 2021 by the U.S. departments of Homeland Security and Justice to speed the immigration hearing process for people who enter at the southwest border, the ABA recently launched the [Pro Bono Matters for Families Facing Deportation](#) website. Through this new site, the ABA gathers and lists the cases of families needing pro bono legal representation in 11 U.S. cities: Boston, Denver, Detroit, El Paso, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark, New York, San Diego, San Francisco, and Seattle. Lawyers who sign up to help will have access to a new pro bono manual and training sessions. "The need for pro bono lawyers right now is huge," ABA President Reginald Turner said in a release. "The ABA believes that all families facing deportation deserve meaningful access to legal counsel." Read more about this effort at [ABA Journal](#).

## **January-February Bar Leader Focuses on Bars' Work Toward Increased DEI**

The killing of George Floyd in May 2020 and the resulting protests that summer prompted many bars across the country to initiate new efforts toward diversity, equity and inclusion or to intensify their existing work. The [January-February 2022 issue of Bar Leader](#) takes an in-depth look at what some bars are doing and shares expert advice for others that may just be getting started.



---

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

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

{{AA\_HTML Manual - Chicago Footer}}