



**Issue 284 | January 26**

## **Licensed Paraprofessional Proposal Sparks Passionate Public Comments in California**

### **Public Comment Period Yields Many Responses Against State Bar of California Licensed Paraprofessional Proposal**

The results of the 110-day public comment period for the State Bar of California proposal to license paraprofessionals are in, and they show strong opposition: Out of 1,318 comments received, the bar says more than 800 opposed the proposal. Some of the roughly 325 supporters of the plan to create a licensed paraprofessional program said they would like to see some modifications to the plan, and other commenters didn't express a clear preference. If this proposal is eventually approved by the bar's board of trustees and also by the California Supreme Court and the state legislature, California would become the largest state with a program through which certain legal paraprofessionals can become licensed to offer some forms of legal service in specific areas of law. [Reuters](#) has more information about this proposal and about reactions from the public, two members of the legislature, and the bar.

### **New Program in Washington State Aims to Increase Legal Service in Center of State, Encourage Persons of Color to Become Lawyers**

In tracking its graduates from the past five years and what they did next, Heritage University—a Washington state college with a high percentage of Hispanic students and a significant percentage of Native American students—noticed something alarming: Out of approximately 1,200 graduating undergrads, only one went on to law school. Meanwhile, stakeholders in the Washington state legal profession saw that a large portion of the state is without adequate legal representation: Out of the approximately 31,000 in-state members of the mandatory Washington State Bar Association, only about 1,500 live in any of eight counties in the center of the state, and few of them are of Latino or Indigenous descent. To help bridge these gaps, law schools at Gonzaga University, Seattle University, and the University of Washington are partnering with Heritage on a pipeline program that will launch in June. At the college's campus in Toppenish, Wash., the three-week program will focus on demystifying the law school application process and the law school experience itself and will give students a chance to interact with several Washington Supreme Court justices and with leaders from minority bars. Learn more at [the Spokesman-Review](#).

### **Automation, Legal Technology, Remote Staffing Services Can Help Rural Lawyers Lighten Their Non-Billable Load**

Traditionally, one big challenge for attorneys in rural areas has been in recruiting, retaining, and being able to pay IT professionals, paralegals, and others to provide practice management support. According to Maddy Martin, vice president of marketing at Smith.ai, a virtual receptionist and intake service, embracing automation and using legal technology and service providers can help rural lawyers get on a more level playing field with their urban and suburban peers. But before implementing any automated system, remote staffing service, or other such solution, Martin writes, it's important to know which tasks would most benefit from being streamlined so the lawyer can focus more on substantive legal work. At [Attorney at Work](#), she shares some of the options that are available, and a matrix that can help lawyers decide what works best for them.

## Younger Employees Feeling Unsupported, Tempted to Leave? Try More Training and Mentoring, Even While Remote

It's tempting to think that the lack of mentoring that many young professionals are experiencing is a function of remote work and that, therefore, they will necessarily feel more supported and better trained when and if in-person work fully resumes. But the lack of training and mentoring in many workplaces goes back long before the pandemic, says Ed Zitron, a writer and CEO of public relations firm EZPR. In 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor found that managers at organizations with 100 to 500 employees provided their employees with an average of six minutes of on-the-job training every six months, and a 2019 survey found that only 37 percent of professionals had mentors, mostly via informal arrangements rather than official programs. Whether a younger employee is at home, across the country, or right next to you, Zitron writes, investing focused time and attention toward their growth and success can help prevent them from joining the "Great Resignation." At [The Atlantic](#), Zitron shares further observations about training and mentoring now and in the past, and some tips for how to start doing a better job of it, regardless of what the workplace currently looks like.

## Zoom Roundtable on February 11 to Address Possible Amendments to Comments of ABA Model Rules 1.0, 1.1, and 1.2

The ABA Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility and Standing Committee on Professional Regulation invite you to attend a Zoom public roundtable relating to a discussion draft of possible amendments to the Comments of Model Rules of Professional Conduct 1.0 (Terminology), 1.1 (Competence), and 1.2 (Scope of Representation and Allocation of Authority between Client and Lawyer). The roundtable will be held on February 11, 2022, at 4:30-6:30 p.m. Eastern (3:30-5:30 p.m. Central; 1:30-3:30 p.m. Pacific). To view the discussion draft and register to provide comments or to attend, please visit the ABA Center for Professional Responsibility [website](#).

## 2022 ABA Bar Leadership Institute: Safe, Rewarding, and In Person!

The ABA Division for Bar Services has received a lot of questions lately about the 2022 Bar Leadership Institute, to be held March 16-18—the main question being whether this event will be in person. The answer is "yes": Current health and safety information from the CDC and from local authorities indicates that we can safely meet in person at BLI's longtime home, the Chicago Marriott Downtown. One lesson of the past year and a half has been the value of connecting—safely—with each other as we find a new path forward as leaders. We continue to monitor city and state requirements regarding vaccines and other COVID-19 control measures. Visit [the BLI website](#) for information on this meeting's vaccine requirements and other safety measures, for details about this year's programming, and to register. We can't wait to see you!



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