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California Pivots on Nonlawyer Owned Firms

After Criticism, State Bar of California Working Group Opts Not to Recommend That Nonlawyers Be Allowed to Own Stake in Law Firms

In a public meeting last week, the chair of the State Bar of California Paraprofessional Program Working Group announced that, after much negative feedback, the group will not recommend that nonlawyers be allowed to own a stake in law firms. This idea was being considered as part of a discussion of possible structures for a new program in which licensed nonlawyer professionals could offer limited legal services. The committee also voted to further restrict the areas of law in which these new paraprofessionals could practice and endorsed language prohibiting the bar from using any money to support the new program that would have otherwise been spent on discipline. [The Recorder](#) has more details about the meeting, other recent decisions by the committee, and the timeline for the committee's report and next steps.

Tennessee Supreme Court Rejects Nashville Bar Association Proposal to Require CLE in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Bias

Last week, the Tennessee Supreme Court denied a request by the Nashville Bar Association to require two hours of CLE credit each year for all Tennessee attorneys in diversity, equity, inclusion and elimination of bias. The bar initially made the request in September 2020, after a summer of nationwide protests regarding the killing of George Floyd and other instances of racial inequity. Among other organizations backing this proposal were the Knoxville Bar Association, Memphis Bar Association, and Lawyers' Association for Women Marion Griffin Chapter. After surveying its members, the Tennessee Bar Association asked the court to instead adopt a separate plan for one additional required CLE hour on professionalism, with diversity and bias training as one option among other topics. The [Nashville Post](#) covers the court's decision and some lawyers' and law-related organizations' responses to the NBA proposal.

Ohio Supreme Court: Lawyer's Profane Outburst Toward Judge at Bar Holiday Event Violated Ethics Rule

Should a lawyer be allowed to shout obscenities at a judge while both are at a party? An Ohio lawyer says that her outburst at a 2018 holiday event held by the Logan County Bar Association is covered by the First Amendment. However, earlier this month, the Ohio Supreme Court gave Natalie Bahan a stayed six-month suspension, citing an ethics rule that requires lawyers to maintain a respectful attitude toward the courts. Bahan, who appeared to be intoxicated when she yelled at Judge William Goslee, must engage in no further misconduct, submit to a substance use assessment by the Ohio Lawyers Assistance Program, and comply with recommendations from the OLAP in order for her suspension to be stayed. Bahan had argued that her profanity was protected political speech because it was intended to criticize Goslee's previous courtroom conduct. Learn more at [ABA Journal](#).

New IAALS Initiative to Study, Develop Best Practices and

Models for Programs That Allow Authorized Nonlawyers to Give Legal Help

Earlier this month, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System announced its new initiative called Allied Legal Professionals, which will analyze existing and proposed projects and research on nonlawyer legal representation, work with leaders and stakeholders to establish best practices and recommendations for this form of legal assistance, and then build models for states to follow when considering and creating programs related to these professionals. Representatives from IAALS noted that access to legal help is not just a problem for people with low incomes, that allied legal professionals are akin to nurse practitioners, and that research shows people who need legal assistance are open to receiving it from authorized, qualified providers who are not lawyers. Over what span of time will the initiative's work take place? Find out at [Law360](#).



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