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**Issue 401 | October 9**

## **How Attorneys Can Help with Hurricane Recovery Efforts**

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Attorneys play a vital role in hurricane recovery, and bars are mobilizing to ensure that people receive the legal assistance they need in the wake of Hurricane Helene. In response to the disaster, the North Carolina Supreme Court issued a temporary rule amendment, allowing out-of-state attorneys to provide pro bono services to hurricane-affected residents. Interested attorneys can access the necessary forms on the [North Carolina State Bar's](#) website. Additionally, The [Florida Bar](#) created a hurricane resource page and set up a hotline for residents to report attorney misconduct related to the storm's aftermath and in anticipation of Hurricane Milton. The [ABA Center for Pro Bono](#) developed a resource page for pro bono opportunities. Read [ABA President William R. Bay's](#) message on how lawyers can help with hurricane relief efforts, including through the [ABA Young Lawyers Division Disaster Legal Services Program](#).

### **Texas Bar Seeks Changes to Paraprofessional Licensing**

The State Bar of Texas has proposed revisions to a series of upcoming state supreme court rule changes, which would allow non-attorneys to perform limited legal services. Under the proposed changes, paraprofessionals and court access assistants could offer limited services in areas such as family law, estate planning, probate law, and consumer debt law. Paraprofessionals would be able to perform some legal services unsupervised, while court access assistants would be supervised by a sponsoring agency, such as a legal aid organization or a law school clinic. Attorneys have raised concerns regarding the education requirements for these roles, potential involvement in cases involving non-citizens, and the need for clear disclosures to clients about the service providers' qualifications. You can read the full update on this proposal at [Law360](#).

### **Bullying Study in Legal Profession**

A recent survey commissioned by the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism highlights the troubling extent of bullying in the legal profession. The report, *Bullying in the Legal Profession: A Study of Illinois Lawyers' Experiences and Recommendations for Change*, found that 18% of Illinois lawyers have left a job due to bullying. The percentage is higher among attorneys identifying as female, minority, LGBTQ+, or having a disability. Of the 6,000 lawyers surveyed, many reported experiencing bullying in their workplaces, yet only about 1 in 5 informed a supervisor. The study also offers recommendations for reducing such behavior. You can read more about the findings in the [ABA Journal](#).

### **Pushback on Changes to Diversity Standards in Law School Accreditation**

Proposed changes to amend the ABA's "diversity and inclusion" standard as part of law school accreditation have sparked pushback from several prominent legal education organizations. The ABA's current accreditation standards mandate that law schools offer "full opportunities" to "underrepresented groups" such as women and racial and ethnic minorities. The [proposed amended standard](#) [pdf] removes the term "diversity" and

reframes the language to emphasize "access" to law school and a "supportive learning environment" for "all persons", "including those with identities that historically have been disadvantaged or excluded from the legal profession." Opponents, including 44 law school deans, argue that these changes could stall or potentially reverse decades of progress in promoting equity in legal education. The changes are in response to the recent U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*. The ruling's impact on diverse law school applicants is still unknown, but the ABA will release demographic data on the first post-decision class in December. [Reuters](#) has more on this ongoing issue.



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