

NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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Arizona Supreme Court Approves Amended Bar Governance Rules

PHOENIX – The Arizona Supreme Court has approved changes for the governance of the State Bar of Arizona and other aspects of legal practice in Arizona. These changes resulted from recommendations made in September 2015 by a [Task Force on the Review of the Role and Governance of the State Bar](#). Chief Justice Scott Bales established the Task Force in 2014; it was chaired by former Chief Justice Rebecca White Berch and included not only attorneys from across Arizona but also several distinguished public figures and community leaders.

Attorneys licensed to practice in Arizona must be members of the State Bar. Chief Justice Bales said that “The State Bar of Arizona has well served its members, the public, and the administration of justice in Arizona for nearly eighty years. The Task Force was created under the Supreme Court’s [Strategic Agenda](#) as part of efforts to periodically review and update our regulation of the legal profession.”

The [amendments](#) restate the mission of the State Bar as “*to serve and protect the public with respect to the provision of legal services and access to justice. Consistent with these goals, the State Bar of Arizona seeks to improve the administration of justice and the competency, ethics, and professionalism of lawyers practicing in Arizona.*”

Under the supervision of the Supreme Court, the State Bar is empowered to engage in various activities, including aiding the Court in the regulation and discipline of attorneys; promoting access to justice for those who live, work, and do business in Arizona; conducting educational programs; and serving the professional needs of its members.

Changes approved by the Arizona Supreme Court include:

- Restructuring the [Board of Legal Specialization](#), which certifies lawyers who are highly experienced in certain practice areas
- Specifying qualifications and term limits for members of the State Bar’s Board of Governors,
- Providing for the appointment of non-lawyer Board members by the Supreme Court,
- Recognizing tribal court judges as judicial members of the State Bar, and
- Directing that the State Bar will conduct its meetings and maintain records under public access policies adopted by the Supreme Court.

Concurrent with the adoption of these changes, the Supreme Court circulated for public comment [proposed amendments](#) to the Lawyer’s Oath of Admission and Creed of Professionalism. These changes reaffirm and update language recognizing the duties of lawyers to act professionally, to be honest in their dealings with others, and to support the fair administration of justice.

“The Court believes that the changes in the bar governance rules will help ensure that the State Bar continues to serve the public and its members effectively by supporting the fair administration of justice and the competence and professionalism of lawyers practicing in our state,” Chief Justice Bales said.

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