

WASHINGTON STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

August 7, 2026

Meeting Materials

Zoom and Teleconference



**Board of Governors Meeting
HELD VIRTUALLY
August 7, 2026, 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM**

WSBA Mission: To serve the public and the members of the Bar, to ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice.

ALL ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA ARE POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS

Meeting ID: 895 7620 6536 Passcode: 777091

<https://wsba.zoom.us/j/89576206536?pwd=2X6HsVDlPBvb9ePtGeZPXJbbx06oOE.1>

To participate by phone, call +1 253-205-0468

2:00 PM – CALL TO ORDER

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- ☐ RECEIVE AND DISCUSS LEGAL ADVICE RE CANCELLATION OF THE JULY 2026 BAR EXAM

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

- ☐ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE & REPORT RE CANCELLATION OF THE JULY 2026 BAR EXAM

ACTION ITEMS

- ☐ RECOMMENDATIONS WITH RESPECT TO APPLICANTS' COSTS TO TAKE THE BAR EXAM
- ☐ NEW MEMBER COMMITTEE PROPOSED STATEMENT RE: JULY BAR EXAM 31

MEMBER & PUBLIC COMMENT

- ☐ MEMBER AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

4:00 PM – ADJOURN

Subject: FW: [External]Bar Exam Comments
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at 4:28:21 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Aziza Ozgoren on behalf of Terra Nevitt
To: Aziza Ozgoren

From: allee72092@gmail.com <allee72092@gmail.com>
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at 1:38 PM
To: Terra Nevitt <terran@wsba.org>
Subject: [External]Bar Exam Comments

Hi Ms. Nevitt,

I do not expect a response to this email. I wanted to share my experience with the Board of Governors in anticipation of their meeting this week related to the most recent administration of the bar exam. I hope my experience as someone who wants to be an attorney in WA but has not obtained a passing bar exam score is a helpful perspective.

As a class of 2018 Seattle University School of Law graduate, I would like to take a moment to inform the WSBA and the Supreme Court of what it is really like to be a legal professional in Washington as a J.D. without a bar number.

I graduated with over 200 hours of pro bono service, two successful juvenile criminal trials, and law review experience as an editor. I took the bar in July 2018, February 2019, and obtained a 265 during my last attempt in July 2019.

After spending 1.5 years unemployed and studying for the bar, I chose to focus on gaining meaningful employment. In January 2020, I was hired to an hourly position as a Family Law Facilitator. During the two years I worked with King County Superior Court, I gained insight into court administration, assisted pro se litigants with their family law forms, became a local court rules expert, and helped KCSC implement the Uniform Guardianship Act.

When I wanted to move onto a salaried position, I was informed by the law firms I interviewed with that despite my experience in law school, my J.D., and helping the court and litigants navigate the UGA, I would need to begin as a legal assistant, a position that only requires a high school diploma.

Currently, I work as a Judicial Administrative Assistant for the Court of Appeals. Although I have the 2nd most legal experience in my chambers, where my experience in the trial courts has been incredibly beneficial, I am paid the least.

One practical issue of not having a bar number is that since I graduated from law school eight years ago, I do not have usable writing samples. Because I don't have a bar number, I am not eligible for positions where I could draft a current writing sample.

I explain this to you to show you the legal culture: A J.D. without a bar number is no J.D. at all. And, as I explained in my letters to the Supreme Court in 2020 and 2025, older graduates of law school have less protections and less support from the law schools than recent graduates (Rule 9 eligibility and loan grace period).

If the ultimate goal of the WSBA and the Supreme Court is fairness, fairness is not what has been

achieved.

It is not fair that there are a class of WA attorneys who never had to sit for the bar exam, while I've taken it three times. Its not fair that every year since I stopped taking the exam, the Supreme Court has changed the passing score. Its not fair that I obtained a score of 265 in July 2019, but I am not eligible to apply for licensure even though the Supreme Court has retroactively lowered the score to 260. Its not fair that when the alterative licensure pathway is approved, that I will have to start from zero and I will not be able to apply the legal experiences I have cultivated since law school into my portfolio.

The fairest option is to grant diploma privilege to all those who wish to be licensed and who are otherwise eligible despite their bar exam score.

While I beg the WSBA and Supreme Court to include me in the group of J.D.s eligible to apply for licensure, I understand this is not about me.

Please do not subject these examinees to the purgatory that is being a J.D. in WA without a bar number.

Sincerely,

Allison Lee

Subject: [External]Equitable Inclusion of Foreign-Trained Attorneys,LL.M Applicants in Diploma Privilege Recommendation

Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at 4:13:32 PM Pacific Daylight Time

From: Seth Adams Anunda

To: Board Feedback

CC: sunitha@wsbalaw.org, hunter@wsbalaw.org, Terra Nevitt, alec@wsbalaw.org

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Dear Members of the WSBA Board of Governors,

My name is Seth Anunda, and I am one of the 645 applicants whose professional future was placed in limbo by the catastrophic technical infrastructure failure and subsequent cancellation of the July 2026 bar exam in Yakima. I am writing to provide formal public comment ahead of the special meeting on August 7 to request that the Board's recommendation for emergency diploma privilege explicitly include foreign-trained attorneys and LL.M. graduates.

It is imperative that the Board distinguishes the current crisis from the 2020 scenario to ensure an equitable remedy. While the Court restricted 2020 diploma privilege to graduates of ABA-accredited law schools, the July 2026 cancellation was a localized administrative failure rather than a global public health crisis. In 2020, applicants were geographically dispersed; in 2026, every impacted applicant was in a single room in Yakima, enduring the same systemic breakdown regardless of their degree type.

Furthermore, foreign-trained applicants in this cohort have already demonstrated complete administrative compliance. We have cleared all WSBA prerequisites, including Character and Fitness checks, the MPRE, and the Washington Law Component (WLC). Excluding this group would ignore our shared experience in Yakima and inflict unique hardships, as many of us face strict employer-sponsored visa timelines and significant international travel costs that a deferred exam date cannot remedy.

I urge the Board to recommend a comprehensive, inclusive solution to the Supreme Court that protects all qualified Yakima applicants equally and avoids the structural inequities of the past.

Thank you for your leadership and for your work on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Seth A Anunda

"What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us, are tiny matters compared to what lives within us." Monanda

Subject: [External]Input for the August 7 Board Meeting — Affected July 2026 Applicant

Date: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 at 6:45:34 AM Pacific Daylight Time

From: Kim

To: Board Feedback

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Dear Members of the Board of Governors,

As one of the applicants scheduled to sit for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination, allow me to begin by thanking the Board for the care it has shown those affected by the cancellation, and for its continued work ahead of the August 7 meeting. Its evident commitment to a fair and considered response is deeply appreciated.

The Board is no doubt hearing from many affected examinees. Mine is one of the smaller voices among them, and it is the worry that such voices may go unheard that moves me to write at all.

Having earned an LL.M. from an ABA-approved law school, I traveled from my home in Seoul to Yakima to sit for the examination — some nineteen hours each way. To prepare properly, I arrived several days early, at considerable cost in travel and lodging.

Those costs fall on narrow means. As a single mother of two, raising children without support, I have long lived within tight limits. Legal education was worth pursuing nonetheless, in the hope of practicing for those who most struggle to secure it. Preparation asked for my full attention, and my employment was set aside in April to give it.

My family's needs require a return to work as soon as possible, which leaves any further trip to Washington for a makeup examination uncertain. The cancellation reaches beyond a lost testing day; for some, it has left financial, professional, and personal burdens that are not easily set right. That harm fell alike on all who sat that day, whatever the path by which each came to qualify. Yet its weight is not borne equally — for a few, it may foreclose the opportunity to sit again at all.

Through no fault of any applicant, that day did not unfold as it should have. As the Board weighs its options — including any input it may offer the Court — I would respectfully ask that those facing such added hardship be kept in view, and that any relief aim, so far as possible, to restore those affected to where they would have stood had the examination gone forward as planned — so that no affected applicant is left without recourse by reason of the route by which they earned their place.

My gratitude remains with the Board — for its time, its care, and its commitment to a fair and equitable resolution.

Respectfully,
Bo Young Kim

Subject: [External]July 2026 Washington State Bar Exam - Written Public Comment
Date: Monday, August 3, 2026 at 7:07:40 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Selena Liu
To: Board Feedback

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Dear WSBA Board of Governors,

My name is Selena (Wei) Liu, I am a 2026 J.D. graduate at the University of Washington, School of Law, and I sat for the July 2026 WA bar exam in Yakima.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide public comment. I ask that the Board consider the issues experienced by applicants whose employment depends on receiving a bar exam score. I have accepted a post-grad position in another NextGen state, and my employment is contingent on obtaining a transferable NextGen score. Delaying until the February 2027 exam is not feasible for me or others in similar circumstances. If alternative pathways such as diploma privilege are being considered, I respectfully request that the option to sit for a rescheduled exam no later than September 2026 remains available for affected July 2026 applicants.

Washington can look to other jurisdictions that successfully administered the NextGen bar exam for guidance in planning a rescheduled administration for September 2026. For example, Oregon used multiple law schools as testing locations, which helped reduce the risk of widespread technical issues such as those experienced in Yakima.

Thank you for your consideration and for your efforts to develop a fair solution for all July 2026 applicants impacted.

Selena (Wei) Liu



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August 4, 2026

Honorable Debra L. Stephens

Chief Justice, Washington State Supreme Court

Temple of Justice

PO Box 40929

Olympia, WA 98504-0929

Re: July 2026 Bar Examination – Recommendation of the Superior Court Judges' Association

Dear Chief Justice Stephens,

I write on behalf of the Superior Court Judges' Association concerning the 645 applicants whose July 2026 bar examination could not be administered. The SCJA's Board of Trustees has authorized this letter and the recommendation it sets out.

The trial courts' stake. Delay in licensing this cohort is not operationally neutral. A significant number of these applicants were slated to begin work in public defense offices and in prosecuting attorneys' offices across the state, at a moment when both are implementing new caseload standards. In our smaller counties, two or three unfilled positions is a docket. The consequences fall on in-custody defendants, on speedy trial calculations under CrR 3.3, and on litigants who wait.

The SCJA does not support provisional admission. Washington has never granted provisional admission to the bar, and we do not think it should begin here. A lawyer admitted provisionally who later fails the examination must withdraw from every matter in which the lawyer has appeared. The clients absorb that – in continuances, in substitution of counsel, in representation begun and abandoned mid-course, and in criminal matters in claims that may follow. Applied to a cohort of this size, the consequences to clients would be untenable, and the trial courts would bear the administration of them. We urge the Court not to create a class of lawyers whose licenses may be withdrawn while their clients' cases are pending.

Graduates of approved law schools. We support the deans of Washington's three law schools and recommend admission by diploma privilege for every applicant in this cohort who qualified to sit under APR 3(b)(1) — that is, a graduate of a law school approved by the Board of Governors at the time the degree was conferred — and who has not previously sat for the Washington bar examination without passing it. An applicant who has previously sat for the Washington examination without passing should instead be treated as described below. This Court granted diploma privilege in comparable circumstances in June 2020, and the graduates who sat for the examination in Yakima on July 28 did everything asked of them. We further recommend that any applicant with testing accommodations who meets the same criteria and who was able to complete the examination be admitted on the same basis. Whatever portion of the examination that group was able to complete, their treatment should not turn on the accident of which

applicants were connected to functioning equipment. We note that the definition of an approved law school expands on September 1, 2026, to include law schools recognized by a state or territory of the United States or the District of Columbia as meeting the education requirement to sit for that jurisdiction's bar examination. Because that date coincides with the first day of the makeup examination as tentatively scheduled, we ask that any order the Court enters specify which definition governs this cohort.

All other applicants. Every applicant who qualified to sit under APR 3(b)(2), (b)(3), or (b)(4) — those who completed the law clerk program, lawyers from common law jurisdictions, and those holding either a Juris Doctor from a law school not approved by the Board of Governors or a foreign law degree together with an LL.M. degree for the practice of law — together with every applicant otherwise within APR 3(b)(1) who has previously sat for the Washington bar examination without passing it, should be treated the same. Each should be authorized to practice under APR 9 with a current or prospective employer, and each should be permitted to sit for the examination in September 2026, February 2027, or July 2027 at no additional cost. We support whatever emergency amendments to APR 9 the Court deems necessary, including amendments admitting or readmitting these applicants to limited practice, continuing that authority until each applicant's licensure is resolved rather than for a fixed period, and, if the Court wishes, enlarging the scope of practice the rule permits. Each of these applicants should be admitted under the Admission and Practice Rules in effect when the applicant seeks admission, including any additional pathway the Court adopts in the interim.

Survey of prior diploma privilege recipients. We ask the Court to direct the WSBA to complete and publish, in aggregate form, the survey of the 2020 diploma privilege recipients that it announced in 2024, including grievance and discipline rates. That information bears directly on the questions now before the Court and on those the Court will face as the alternative pathways are implemented.

Respectfully submitted,



Judge Michael R. Scott
President, Superior Court Judges' Association

cc: Associate Justices, Supreme Court of Washington
Terra Nevitt, WSBA Executive Director
Dawn Marie Rubio, Administrative Office of the Courts

Subject: [External]Public Comment / Board Feedback: Urging WSBA Board of Governors to Recommend Equal & Inclusive Direct Admission (Diploma Privilege) for ALL July 2026 Examinees (Including LL.M. Candidates)
Date: Monday, August 3, 2026 at 1:13:32 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Shaz Meftahi
To: Board Feedback
CC: Shaz Meftahi

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Dear Members of the Board of Governors,

I am writing to respectfully submit public feedback ahead of the Board's Special Meeting on Friday, August 7, 2026. As the Board considers whether and how to provide recommendations to the Washington Supreme Court regarding alternative pathways to admission following the administrative cancellation of the July 2026 bar exam, I urge the Board to recommend a fair, comprehensive, and inclusive relief framework: **Direct Licensure (Emergency Diploma Privilege) for ALL registered July 2026 examinees, explicitly including foreign-educated Master of Laws (LL.M.) candidates, paired with an Optional September Administration for candidates requiring UBE score portability.**

I. Why 2026 Requires a Universal Solution (And Why It Differs from 2020)

In 2020, emergency diploma privilege was granted selectively during the COVID-19 pandemic based on ABA J.D. program accreditation while exams continued to be administered. The circumstances of July 2026 are fundamentally different:

1. **Equal Harm from Institutional Infrastructure Collapse:** On July 28, 2026, every examinee sitting in the Yakima Convention Center endured six grueling hours of uncertainty, repeated false starts, adrenaline spikes, and eventual cancellation due entirely to a 100% vendor-driven software and network failure. J.D. candidates and LL.M. candidates sat in the exact same room, suffered the exact same psychological, financial, and logistical disruption, and were equally prevented from completing the exam through no fault of their own.
2. **Proven Academic Rigor & Pre-Licensing Vetting:** Foreign-educated LL.M. candidates who qualify to sit for the Washington Bar complete extensive, specialized coursework at ABA-accredited U.S. law schools specifically designed to master U.S. jurisprudence. Furthermore, candidates in this pool—including myself—have already fulfilled every mandatory prerequisite outside the bar exam itself: we have passed the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE), completed the Washington Law Component (WLC), and cleared full character, fitness, and ethics vetting.
3. **Inappropriate Burden-Shifting:** Forcing candidates to absorb the full cost of a

vendor collapse by waiting for a retake is fundamentally unfair.

II. Recommended Framework: Direct Licensure + Optional Portability Exam

While commercial test-prep providers (Barbri, Themis, Kaplan, AdaptiBar) extending course access through September provides material study support, it does not alleviate the massive societal and financial burdens placed on examinees:

- **Delayed Income & Unpaid Study Time:** Candidates face another month or more without active attorney salaries, compounding housing, living, and health insurance costs.
- **Employer Impact & Public Interest Readiness:** Law firms, corporate legal departments, public defenders, and prosecutors rely on fall onboarding schedules. Pushing exam results to late October or November stalls courtroom appearances, caseload management, and critical promotional tracks.
- **Peak Readiness & Mental Burnout:** As law school leadership across the state has noted, candidates reached peak bar preparation by July 28. Maintaining high-intensity readiness for an extended period creates severe cognitive fatigue.

The Two-Pronged Hybrid Solution:

1. **Direct State Admission (APR 3) for ALL July 2026 Examinees:** Grants immediate Washington licensure to all registered J.D. and LL.M. examinees who presented themselves to test. This immediately resolves employer delays, mitigates financial strain, and lets qualified professionals begin serving Washington state right away.
2. **Optional September Makeup Exam for Portability:** For candidates who specifically require a transferable Uniform Bar Exam (UBE) score to practice in another jurisdiction, keeping the September exam as an *optional* pathway accommodates out-of-state career plans. With prep course access already extended, these candidates can sit for portability without the existential threat of being blocked from practicing in Washington.

III. Individual Impact

To illustrate why an inclusive recommendation protects the public while upholding equity, I share my personal background as an applicant:

- **Academic Record:** LL.M., University of Dayton School of Law (3.95 GPA, 30 semester credits from ABA-approved U.S. law school); M.J., University of Washington School of Law (3.60 GPA, 45 quarter credits from ABA-approved U.S. law school); LL.B., University of Tehran School of Law (4.0 GPA equivalent).
- **20+ Years of Legal Leadership in WA:** Washington resident since 2001, working 20 years as a Paralegal, Contracts Manager, and Director of Contracts in high tech—routinely drafting multi-million-dollar commercial agreements and managing corporate compliance.

- **Completed Requirements:** Passed MPRE (score of 93), passed WLC (score of 88%), cleared all character and fitness reviews.
- **Immediate Career Jeopardy:** After raising my family as a single mother while working full-time, I earned my LL.M. to fulfill a lifelong dream. I have a firm promise of promotion to Counsel upon bar admission. Delays caused by institutional testing failures directly jeopardize my professional advancement and livelihood.

IV. Conclusion

Applicants fulfilled every duty: we studied for months, funded travel and lodging, took leave from work, and showed up ready to test. The failure was entirely institutional.

I respectfully ask the Board of Governors to recommend that the Washington Supreme Court issue a comprehensive order granting **Direct Admission to all registered July 2026 J.D. and LL.M. examinees**, while offering an **Optional September exam for score portability**.

Thank you for your dedicated leadership and for considering this input.

Respectfully submitted,

Shahrzad (Shaz) Meftahi

WSBA Applicant Web ID: 10782

Phone: (206) 999-8882

Email: shahrzadmftahi@hotmail.com

Subject: [External]Public Comment for Aug. 7 Special Meeting — Emergency Diploma Privilege for All Affected July
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at 3:53:42 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Harry Yamamoto
To: Board Feedback

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Dear Members of the WSBA Board of Governors:

I respectfully submit this public comment for the Board's Special Meeting on August 7, 2026, and urge the Board to recommend emergency diploma privilege for all applicants who appeared as required for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination in Yakima, including applicants who qualified through the foreign-educated/LL.M. pathway and have otherwise satisfied the applicable eligibility and character-and-fitness requirements.

I traveled from Tokyo, Japan, to take the examination. I arrived at the venue as instructed and remained there through more than six hours of unsuccessful efforts to begin the exam. Examinees were then informed that testing would proceed the following day, and I therefore maintained my lodging and travel arrangements in reliance on that announcement. Only several hours later were we informed that the entire administration had been cancelled.

A September examination is not an equivalent remedy for every affected applicant. I am employed full time in Japan. Sitting for a September examination would require another international trip, additional airfare and lodging, and another period of leave from work, all on very short notice. These burdens arise solely from an examination-administration failure over which applicants had no control.

Every applicant who appeared in Yakima fulfilled the obligation imposed upon us. We were prepared to be tested; Washington was unable to administer the examination. Requiring those same applicants to bear the financial, professional, and personal consequences of a second administration would not restore fairness.

I therefore ask the Board to recommend emergency diploma privilege, resulting in full admission, for all otherwise eligible applicants who appeared as required. Examinees with approved accommodations who completed the examination should be permitted either to retain their resulting score or to elect the same emergency relief.

Thank you for considering this input.

Respectfully submitted,

Hideki Yamamoto
July 2026 Washington Bar Exam Applicant

Subject: [External]Public Comment for the August 7, 2026 Special Board Meeting – Recommendation for Emergency Diploma Privilege
Date: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 at 3:14:04 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Kiran Mullapudi
To: Board Feedback

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Dear Members of the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors,

I respectfully submit this comment for consideration at your August 7, 2026 Special Meeting regarding whether to recommend alternative pathways to admission to the Washington Supreme Court in response to the cancellation of the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination.

I urge the Board to recommend emergency diploma privilege for every applicant who was approved and eligible to sit for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination, appeared at the designated testing site, and was prevented from completing the examination because of the unprecedented technology failure.

The cancellation was not caused by any action or omission of the applicants. Every affected examinee fulfilled the obligations required to become licensed. We completed our legal education, satisfied Washington's eligibility requirements, successfully completed the character and fitness process, paid the required fees, devoted months of preparation, and appeared at the assigned testing location ready to take the examination. The failure occurred in the administration of the examination itself.

The Washington bar admission process appropriately holds applicants to the highest standard of diligence and accountability. Before an applicant is permitted to sit for the examination, they must satisfy rigorous educational requirements, submit extensive documentation, meet strict deadlines, and comply with every procedural rule. Failure to satisfy even one requirement can delay or prevent admission. Applicants are expected to bear the consequences of their own mistakes.

The same standard of diligence should apply to the organizations responsible for administering the examination.

The transition to the NextGen Bar Examination had been planned for years. The number of registered applicants was known months before the examination. Those responsible for administering the examination had sufficient opportunity to evaluate the testing site's technical capacity, validate internet and network infrastructure, conduct realistic capacity and load testing, and establish meaningful contingency plans for foreseeable technology failures.

Applicants reasonably expected that these fundamental steps had been completed before exam day. Instead, hundreds of qualified applicants were denied the opportunity to complete the examination because the testing system failed. Regardless of the specific technical cause, applicants should not bear the consequences of failures in planning, implementation, or administration that were entirely outside their control.

Equally concerning was the apparent absence of an effective contingency plan. Technology failures are a foreseeable risk in any computer-based licensing examination, particularly during the inaugural administration of a new testing platform. A high-stakes professional licensing examination should include reliable emergency procedures capable of preserving the integrity of the examination and allowing qualified applicants to complete it. Whether through paper examination materials, an alternative testing platform, or another established emergency protocol, applicants should not lose their opportunity to become licensed because of institutional technology failures.

Although the September makeup examination offers another opportunity to test, it does not fully remedy the harm already suffered. Many applicants incurred significant travel, lodging, transportation, childcare, meal, and lost wage expenses. Others postponed medical procedures, delayed employment, rearranged family responsibilities, or face immigration and financial consequences because of the cancellation. Requiring applicants to repeat those sacrifices due to circumstances beyond their control does not restore the opportunity they lost.

The remedy should reflect the scope of the harm. Every applicant who was approved and eligible to sit for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination, appeared as instructed, and lost the opportunity to complete the examination because of the cancellation should be included in any recommendation for emergency diploma privilege. This recommendation should apply equally to all eligible applicants under Washington's Admission and Practice Rules, including both J.D. and LL.M. applicants who satisfied the requirements to sit for the examination.

This request is not based on convenience or a desire to avoid examination. It is based on fairness, accountability, and equal treatment. Applicants fulfilled every obligation imposed upon them. When the licensing process fails despite years of planning and months of advance notice, the consequences should not fall exclusively upon those who did everything that was required of them.

Washington has previously demonstrated that extraordinary circumstances may warrant extraordinary remedies. The July 2026 cancellation presents such a circumstance. Recommending emergency diploma privilege would recognize that the licensing process failed the applicants—not the other way around—and would preserve public confidence in the fairness, integrity, and accountability of Washington's attorney admission system.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these comments and for your service to the legal profession and the people of Washington.

Respectfully,
Kiranmayee Mullanpudi
LL.M., University of Washington School of Law
July 2026 Washington Bar Examination Applicant

Subject: [External]Public Comment Regarding the July 2026 Bar Exam & JAG

Date: Monday, August 3, 2026 at 5:40:11 PM Pacific Daylight Time

From: Mack McCann

To: Board Feedback, supreme@courts.wa.gov

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Good afternoon,

I am writing to provide some critical context regarding the strict timelines faced by July 2026 examinees who are entering military service as Judge Advocate General (JAG) officers. While I cannot speak for all incoming service members, I can outline the immediate impact this delay has on those entering the Navy JAG Corps.

I am currently scheduled to attend Officer Development School (ODS) in Rhode Island this coming November. However, my orders and attendance are strictly contingent upon passing the bar exam and being fully licensed. The original Oct 9th score release date already presented a compressed timeline (as this was almost a month later than last year's score release). Given the current uncertainty surrounding the July 2026 exam, my employment (and future wages) are now in jeopardy.

A failure to resolve this situation quickly will have severe professional and financial consequences. Missing the November ODS date will delay my training until February or March 2027. This delay will leave my family without income or employment for three to five months, as I will struggle to find temporary employment on such short notice. Additionally, provisional licensing as a remedy is not an option, as the military requires full licensure.

On a personal note, this limbo prevents my family from planning our potential relocation due to military orders to either California or Florida. It also halts our plans to visit elderly grandparents in their 90s before we are stationed far from home.

Given these constraints, granting diploma privilege is the most equitable and efficient path forward. I have serious concerns regarding the feasibility, integrity, and scoring timeline of a rescheduled exam. Candidates should not bear the professional, financial, and personal burdens of a failure that they had no part in.

Thank you for your time and attention to my concerns. I look forward to a swift resolution.

Sincerely,

Mack McCann

J.D.

University of Washington School of Law
(360) 545-2925



Subject: [External]Request for Clarification on Inclusion of All July 2026 Bar Takers in Proposed Relief Measures
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at 10:45:40 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Renata Akalin
To: Board Feedback
Priority: High

You don't often get email from renata.akalin@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To the Washington State Bar Association:

I am writing as a July 2026 bar taker who qualified under APR 3(b) through the LL.M. pathway. I completed my LL.M. at the University of Washington School of Law after leaving my full-time job and taking on \$40,000 in educational debt. I have supported the legal profession since 2017, when I completed UW's Paralegal Studies Program, and I have more than nine years of experience assisting attorneys in contract, commercial, and regulatory matters at Amazon, Microsoft, Pokémon, and Starbucks.

Like all examinees, I spent months preparing for the July exam, arranged childcare, travel, and lodging, and was present in Yakima fully prepared to sit for the exam before the administration failed. I have had no income since beginning the LL.M., and I had secured an in-house counsel position beginning September 1st that is now at risk. Restarting a job search as a paralegal, with no guarantee of employment and a significant pay cut, will have a profound impact on my family.

Given that all bar takers, J.D. and LL.M. alike, were equally affected by the administration failure and were all deemed competent and eligible to sit for the exam, I respectfully ask two questions:

- 1. If relief is granted, will it apply to all July bar takers, including LL.M. graduates who were equally harmed by the administration's failure?**
- 2. If any category of bar takers is excluded from relief, what is the basis for that exclusion? Considering all examinees met the eligibility requirements and suffered the same disruption?**

I appreciate the WSBA Board President's invitation for public comment and will watch the August 7 meeting, but I also wanted to provide written feedback as encouraged.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Renata Akalin

Subject: [External]Fw: Request for Equal Consideration of All Qualified Bar Applicants
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 12:32:06 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: leye bajo
To: Board Feedback

You don't often get email from kol4lee@yahoo.co.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

 *God is always good; God is always right and God is never late.*

----- Forwarded message -----

From: leye bajo <kol4lee@yahoo.co.uk>
To: "supreme@courts.wa.gov" <supreme@courts.wa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, 30 July 2026 at 19:56:28 GMT-7
Subject: Request for Equal Consideration of All Qualified Bar Applicants

Dear Chief Justice and Honorable Justices:

I am one of the many applicants who were supposed to write the July 28 and 28, 2026 Bar Exam in Yakima. I write with respect and appreciation for the tremendous responsibility the Court faces in responding to the unprecedented circumstances surrounding the Washington Bar Examination. I recognize that the Court's primary concern is protecting the public while ensuring fairness to applicants whose path to licensure has been disrupted through no fault of their own.

I read in the news that the Deans of Law from Law Schools in Washington state are advocating that their law students be granted diploma privilege or any form of emergency licensure relief.

If the Court decides to grant diploma privilege or any other form of emergency licensure relief, I respectfully urge the Court to extend that relief to all applicants who were eligible to sit for the examination, including foreign-trained attorneys who qualified under Washington's admission rules, rather than limiting relief solely to graduates of ABA-accredited law schools.

Foreign-trained attorneys who have met Washington's eligibility requirements have already demonstrated that their legal education and credentials satisfy the standards necessary to take the Washington Bar

Examination. Many have also practiced law successfully for years in other jurisdictions before relocating to Washington.

Like graduates of ABA-accredited law schools, these applicants devoted substantial time, financial resources, and personal sacrifice to preparing for the bar examination. They paid the same application fees, invested months of intensive study, arranged time away from work and family responsibilities, and endured the same uncertainty, stress, and emotional strain caused by the recent disruption of the examination process. The impact of these extraordinary events has not been limited by where an applicant earned a law degree.

Indeed, experienced foreign-trained attorneys may have an even stronger claim for equitable consideration because they have already demonstrated their competence through years of legal practice while also completing the additional steps required to become eligible for admission in Washington. Excluding them solely because their legal education occurred outside an ABA-accredited institution would create a distinction that bears little relationship to the hardships the Court seeks to remedy.

The purpose of emergency relief is to address the extraordinary burden imposed by circumstances beyond the applicants' control. That burden has been shared equally by every qualified applicant who prepared for this examination. An equitable solution should therefore recognize all applicants who were lawfully eligible to sit for the exam, regardless of whether their legal education was obtained at an ABA-accredited institution or through another pathway recognized by Washington's admission rules.

The legal profession is strengthened by attorneys with diverse educational and professional backgrounds. Washington has long recognized that qualified foreign-trained lawyers can contribute meaningfully to the practice of law within the state. Any emergency remedy should reflect that inclusive principle.

I respectfully ask the Court to ensure that any relief granted in response to these extraordinary circumstances is administered fairly and without unnecessary distinctions among applicants who have all satisfied Washington's eligibility requirements and who have borne the same financial, emotional, and professional burdens.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and for your continued service to the people of Washington.

Yours faithfully,

Kolade O. Olubajo

Subject: [External]Request for Fair Consideration of Qualified Foreign-Trained LL.M. Applicants with Substantial Legal Experience.

Date: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 at 1:09:30 PM Pacific Daylight Time

From: samiulla malang

To: Bar Leaders

You don't often get email from samiullam786@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Members of the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors,

I respectfully ask you to consider the unique circumstances of qualified foreign-trained LL.M. applicants as you make your recommendations to the Washington Supreme Court.

I invested thousands of dollars to earn my LL.M. in the United States and financed much of my education through loans because I believed that qualifying for the Washington Bar would allow me to continue my legal career, including opportunities in the Middle East and other international jurisdictions. I also spent the last four months preparing for the July 2026 Bar Examination.

The cancellation of the examination was through no fault of the applicants. Today, I face significant financial hardship, emotional stress, and uncertainty. As an international student, I am also deeply concerned about my immigration status, which is approaching its expiration.

I respectfully request that the Board recommend to the Washington Supreme Court that, if any diploma privilege or other equitable licensing pathway is adopted, it also consider qualified foreign-trained LL.M. applicants who have maintained an active law license and possess more than five years of legal practice. Such applicants have already demonstrated their professional competence through years of active legal experience and were deemed eligible by the WSBA after satisfying all admission requirements.

I respectfully request that the Board recommend a fair and equitable remedy that also considers qualified foreign-trained LL.M. applicants with substantial legal experience. We met every eligibility requirement established by the WSBA and were affected by the same unprecedented circumstances as every other applicant.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Samiullah Malang

Subject: [External]Urgent Supplement - Comment on SCJA Recommendation / Emergency Petition regarding July 2026 Bar Exam Cancellation
Date: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 at 11:21:32 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Shaz Meftahi
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK
CC: Board Feedback

You don't often get email from shahrzadmeftahi@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Chief Justice Stephens, Honorable Justices of the Washington Supreme Court, and Clerk of the Court,

I am writing to respectfully submit a second supplement to my prior correspondence (dated July 28 and July 29, 2026) in direct response to the recent recommendation letter submitted to this Court by the Superior Court Judges Association (SCJA).

While I commend the SCJA's recognition that the administrative collapse in Yakima requires immediate emergency relief, I strongly urge the Court **not to adopt the SCJA's proposed bifurcated framework** that excludes foreign-educated LL.M. graduates (APR 3(b)(4)) and Law Clerk program graduates (APR 3(b)(2)) from Emergency Diploma Privilege.

Creating a two-tiered system of relief—granting full licensure to ABA JDs while restricting LL.M. candidates to temporary supervised practice under APR 9—is fundamentally inequitable for the following reasons:

- **Identical Reliance Damage & Administrative Trauma:** The administrative failure, vendor software collapse, six-hour wait, and acute psychological strain in Yakima impacted every single examinee identically. Carving out exceptions based on degree title ignores that the harm suffered was 100% vendor-driven and universally shared.
- **Equivalent Institutional Vetting:** Foreign-educated LL.M. candidates admitted to sit for the Washington Bar have completed extensive, rigorous coursework in U.S. jurisprudence at ABA-accredited law schools, passed character and fitness reviews, and passed both the MPRE and the Washington Law Component. To treat these candidates as inherently higher risk for full licensure disregards their verified academic credentials and state-specific legal training.
- **Economic & Workforce Impact:** Many foreign LL.M. candidates are experienced legal professionals—including contracts managers, corporate legal executives, and public interest advocates—who have served Washington communities and employers for decades. Denying them full diploma privilege severely delays promised promotions, disrupts enterprise operations, and exacerbates the state's ongoing legal services shortage.

Request for Unified Relief: If the Court elects to grant Emergency Diploma Privilege, I respectfully request that the Order apply **uniformly to all qualified candidates who presented themselves to test in Yakima on July 28, 2026, including LL.M. candidates under APR 3(b)(4).**

Thank you for your continued leadership, fairness, and thoughtful deliberation.

Respectfully submitted,

Shahrzad (Shaz) Meftahi

WSBA Applicant Web ID: 10782

Phone: (206) 999-8882

Email: shahrzadmeftahi@hotmail.com

From: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>

Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2026 1:36 PM

To: Shaz Meftahi <shahrzadmeftahi@hotmail.com>

Subject: RE: Urgent Supplement to Emergency Petition for July 2026 Bar Examinees – Request for Equal and Inclusive Diploma Privilege for Qualified Foreign-Educated LL.M. Candidates

Your email has been received and forwarded to the appropriate parties.

Thank you,
Supreme Court Clerk's Office
Washington State Supreme Court
Temple of Justice
415 12th Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98504-0929
supreme@courts.wa.gov

From: Shaz Meftahi <shahrzadmeftahi@hotmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2026 1:20 PM

To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>

Subject: Re: Urgent Supplement to Emergency Petition for July 2026 Bar Examinees – Request for Equal and Inclusive Diploma Privilege for Qualified Foreign-Educated LL.M. Candidates

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are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, **DO NOT DO SO!** Instead, report the incident.

Dear Chief Justice and Honorable Justices of the Washington Supreme Court,

I am writing to respectfully supplement my prior correspondence submitted on July 28 and July 29, 2026, regarding the complete administrative cancellation of the July 2026 NextGen Bar Exam in Yakima.

I deeply appreciate the Court's message issued to examinees acknowledging the extraordinary stress caused by this breakdown and confirming that the Court is actively evaluating resolution options. As the Court deliberates, I urge you to grant **Emergency Diploma Privilege to ALL affected July 2026 examinees**, and to explicitly ensure that **foreign-educated Master of Laws (LL.M.) candidates are fully included** in this remedy.

I. The Inequity of Excluded Relief

In June 2020, when this Court granted emergency diploma privilege during the COVID-19 pandemic, foreign-educated LL.M. graduates were excluded from relief. Repeating such an exclusion today following a 100% vendor-driven administrative collapse would create an arbitrary and inequitable standard:

1. **Identical Suffering and Administrative Disruption:** Every candidate who sat for six hours in the Yakima Convention Center—enduring false starts, adrenaline crashes, and eventual cancellation—suffered the exact same psychological, financial, and logistical damage regardless of degree title.
2. **Proven Rigor of U.S. Legal Education:** Foreign-educated LL.M. candidates who qualify for the Washington Bar complete extensive, specialized coursework at ABA-accredited U.S. law schools specifically designed to master U.S. jurisprudence and state law.
3. **Absorbing Vendor Failure:** Requiring candidates to undergo another high-stakes test in September or February forces applicants to absorb the full cost of an institutional infrastructure failure caused entirely by testing vendor network and software breakdowns.

II. Individual Demonstration of Academic Excellence, Pre-Licensing Completion, and Hardship

To illustrate why an inclusive order protects the public while upholding equity, I respectfully share my academic record and professional history:

- **Academic Excellence Across All Legal Degrees:**
 - **Master of Laws (LL.M.),** University of Dayton School of Law (Graduated 2026) | **3.95 GPA** (30 semester credits earned in ABA-accredited U.S. law coursework).
 - **Master of Jurisprudence (M.J.),** University of Washington School of Law

Subject: [External]Written Comment Regarding the July 2026 Washington Bar Exam Cancellation

Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at 8:00:00 AM Pacific Daylight Time

From: Kassama Dibba

To: Board Feedback

You don't often get email from kassamadibba1@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Members of the Washington State Bar Association Board,

I am writing to share my experience and the impact the cancellation of the July, 2026 Washington Bar Exam had on me.

I came to the United States as an international student at the University of Washington School of Law with hopes and dreams of achieving a lifelong goal: becoming an attorney in Washington State. As a foreign-trained attorney, this journey has required immense dedication, sacrifice, and perseverance. Taking this exam represented years of hard work and the next step in building my legal career.

Traveling to Yakima for the exam was already a significant challenge. It was my first time traveling to the area, and I drove approximately two and a half hours, carrying with me the excitement, anxiety, and hope that comes with such an important moment. Throughout that drive, I kept thinking about the exam ahead and the opportunity I had worked so hard for.

What I did not expect was to arrive and experience the cancellation of the exam. I was devastated. Beyond the emotional disappointment, there were also financial costs, travel expenses, time invested, and the stress of uncertainty about what would happen next.

I recognize that unexpected events can occur, but I hope the Board understands that this was not simply a canceled appointment or an inconvenience. For many applicants, this exam represented years of preparation, personal sacrifice, financial investment, and a deeply meaningful professional milestone.

As an international graduate, this experience was particularly difficult. I came to Washington with a dream of contributing to the legal profession and building a future here. I hope the Board considers the experiences of all affected applicants and provides meaningful support, transparency, and accountability as we move forward.

Thank you for taking the time to hear from those of us who were impacted.

Sincerely,
Kassama Dibba

August 5, 2026

Washington State Bar Association

President, Board of Governors, and Executive Director
1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98101

Subject: Request for WSBA Recommendation of Diploma Privilege and Equal Treatment for All Applicants Approved for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination

Dear President, Members of the Board of Governors, and Executive Director:

I respectfully submit this letter as one of the applicants affected by the unsuccessful administration of the July 2026 Washington NextGen Bar Examination. I respectfully request that the Washington State Bar Association ("WSBA") recommend to the Washington Supreme Court that every applicant approved by the WSBA to sit for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination be granted diploma privilege, or equivalent permanent admission, without distinction based upon educational pathway or prior examination history.

The WSBA occupies a unique and indispensable role in this matter. It individually determined each applicant's eligibility under the Washington Admission and Practice Rules, conducted character and fitness investigations, administered the July 2026 examination, and now serves as one of the Washington Supreme Court's principal advisors in recommending an appropriate remedy. Because the extraordinary circumstances arose during the administration of the licensing process rather than from any deficiency on the part of the applicants, the WSBA is uniquely positioned to recommend a remedy that is fair, equitable, and consistent with Washington's attorney admission system.

I. Reasons Supporting Diploma Privilege

1. Every Applicant Had Already Satisfied Washington's Admission Requirements

Every applicant approved to sit for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination had already satisfied Washington's educational and eligibility requirements before arriving for the examination. The WSBA individually reviewed each applicant's legal education, professional qualifications, and character and fitness before authorizing that applicant to take the examination.

I qualified under APR 3(b) as a foreign-educated lawyer who earned a qualifying LL.M. degree from the University of Washington School of Law. My educational pathway differs from that of an ABA J.D. graduate, but it is an equally valid pathway expressly authorized by the Washington Supreme Court. The WSBA determined that I fully satisfied Washington's admission requirements before approving my application.

Accordingly, every approved applicant entered the July examination having already demonstrated eligibility to become a member of the Washington Bar, with the examination serving only as the final step for demonstrating minimum competence.

2. The Cause Was Administrative, Not Academic

The July 2026 examination was not disrupted because applicants lacked preparation, competence, or professionalism. Rather, the examination was affected by widespread technological difficulties, software malfunctions, communication deficiencies, and inadequate contingency measures that prevented it from being administered fairly.

The cause of these events arose during the administration of the examination itself. Applicants fulfilled every obligation imposed upon them, yet were deprived of the opportunity to complete the licensing process because of circumstances entirely beyond their control.

3. Applicants Were Deprived of the Opportunity to Demonstrate Their Competence

The purpose of the bar examination is to provide qualified applicants with an opportunity to demonstrate the minimum competence required for admission to the practice of law. Every July 2026 applicant devoted months of disciplined study to master the substantive law, legal analysis, and practical lawyering skills evaluated by the NextGen Bar Examination.

Although preparation alone is not the ultimate assurance of minimum competence, it is the essential process through which applicants acquire and strengthen the knowledge and professional skills that the examination is intended to measure. Every applicant completed that demanding process and reached the examination prepared to demonstrate competence.

The administrative breakdown in the examination process prevented applicants from completing the final step of the licensing process through no fault of their own. Diploma privilege would therefore not diminish professional standards. Rather, it would acknowledge that applicants successfully completed every requirement within their control and were denied only the opportunity to complete an examination that the licensing authorities were unable to administer fairly.

4. A Subsequent Examination Cannot Restore the Position Applicants Previously Occupied

A September or later examination cannot return applicants to the position they occupied before July 28, 2026. Applicants must continue studying under prolonged uncertainty, postpone employment and admission to practice, rearrange professional and family obligations, incur additional travel and lodging expenses, purchase renewed bar preparation resources, and sustain continuing financial losses.

Equally significant is the emotional harm resulting from the unsuccessful administration of the examination. Applicants devoted months of sustained effort and personal sacrifice to reach their peak level of preparation. The interruption of the examination transformed that achievement into profound disappointment, frustration, uncertainty, and emotional distress. Requiring applicants to repeat months of intensive preparation while coping with those consequences substantially diminishes their ability to prepare and perform at the same level again. Those harms cannot be fully remedied simply by scheduling another examination.

5. Applicants Reasonably Relied Upon the Integrity of Washington's Licensing Process

Applicants structured their professional and personal lives in reasonable reliance upon the WSBA's approval and the expectation that the July 2026 examination would be fairly administered. Many reduced employment, exhausted savings, incurred educational debt, purchased commercial bar review programs, relocated temporarily, traveled to Yakima, and postponed career opportunities in preparation for the examination.

Those substantial commitments were undertaken only because applicants reasonably relied upon the integrity and proper administration of Washington's licensing process. Through no fault of their own, that reliance was frustrated by the administrative breakdown that occurred during the examination process.

6. Diploma Privilege Would Preserve Public Confidence in Washington's Licensing System

Granting diploma privilege would not lower professional standards. Every applicant had already satisfied Washington's educational, ethical, and eligibility requirements before the examination began. Rather, diploma privilege would recognize that qualified applicants should not bear the consequences of an administrative breakdown that occurred entirely outside their control.

A meaningful remedy would reinforce public confidence that Washington's attorney licensing system is guided not only by competence, but also by fairness, accountability, equal treatment, and public trust.

II. Reasons Supporting Equal Treatment

1. Every Approved Applicant Occupied the Same Legal Position

Once the WSBA approved an applicant to sit for the July 2026 examination, that applicant stood on equal legal footing with every other approved applicant. Differences in educational pathway ceased to have legal significance because each pathway had already been individually reviewed and accepted under Washington's Admission and Practice Rules.

2. Every Applicant Prepared for the Same Examination

Every applicant prepared for the same Washington law, the same NextGen testing format, and the same licensing examination. Because each applicant was approved under Washington's admission process and prepared for the identical examination, no principled basis exists for distinguishing among applicants when fashioning a remedy.

3. The NextGen Examination Was New for Every Applicant

July 2026 marked Washington's first administration of the NextGen Bar Examination. Regardless of whether an applicant had previously taken the Uniform Bar Examination, every applicant encountered the new examination format for the first time. Prior examination history therefore provides no rational basis for unequal treatment.

4. The Administrative Breakdown Affected Every Applicant Equally

The technological difficulties affected ABA graduates, LL.M. graduates, APR 6 Law Clerks, foreign-trained lawyers, attorneys admitted in other jurisdictions, accommodated applicants, first-time applicants, and repeat applicants alike. Every approved applicant experienced the same disruption, delay, uncertainty, financial burden, and emotional distress. The remedy therefore should be as uniform as the administrative breakdown that affected the July 2026 examination.

5. Equity Supports Uniform Relief

The equitable principle that similarly situated persons should be treated alike strongly supports a uniform remedy. Every applicant satisfied the same admission requirements, relied upon the same licensing process, prepared for the same examination, and was equally affected by the administrative breakdown that occurred during the July 2026 examination. Providing different remedies based solely upon educational pathway or prior examination history would create distinctions unrelated to the cause of the disruption and would be inconsistent with the equitable administration of Washington's admission system.

6. The 2020 Gap Should Not Be Repeated

The June 2020 diploma privilege order unintentionally excluded certain applicants who had nevertheless been approved by the WSBA under APR 3(b). The present circumstances are fundamentally different. In 2026, the licensing process itself failed after every applicant had already been individually approved through Washington's admission procedures. Therefore, any relief should be based upon WSBA approval for the July 2026 examination rather than degree type or educational pathway.

III. Requested WSBA Action

I respectfully request that the Washington State Bar Association:

1. **Recommend diploma privilege, or equivalent permanent admission, for every applicant approved to sit for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination.**
2. **Recommend that eligibility for any relief be determined solely by WSBA approval to sit for the July 2026 examination, regardless of educational pathway under APR 3(b) or prior examination history.**
3. **Recommend that any applicant granted diploma privilege retain the voluntary option to sit for any future Washington Bar Examination without forfeiting or affecting that admission status.**
4. **Oppose any recommendation that differentiates among approved applicants based upon educational pathway or prior examination history when every applicant was equally affected by the same administrative breakdown during the July 2026 examination.**

Conclusion

The governing principle is straightforward. Every applicant whom the WSBA determined was qualified to sit for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination satisfied the same admission requirements, relied upon the same licensing process, devoted months to acquiring the knowledge and skills that the examination was intended to measure, and was equally affected by the administrative breakdown that occurred during the administration of the July 2026 examination through no fault of the applicants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Washington State Bar Association to recommend a fair, equitable, and uniform remedy by supporting diploma privilege, or equivalent permanent admission, for every applicant approved to sit for the July 2026 Washington Bar Examination. Such a recommendation would reflect the principles of fairness, equal treatment, reasonable reliance, and confidence in the integrity of Washington's attorney licensing system.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Respectfully submitted,

Gizachew Belete

Applicant, July 2026 Washington Bar Examination

NCBE Number: 10826335

Seattle, Washington

mitkugizachew@gmail.com

206-460-9173

TO: WSBA Board of Governors
CC: Terra Nevitt, Executive Director
FROM: Washington New Members Committee (WNMC)
DATE: August 5, 2026
RE: July 2026 Bar Examination Disruptions and Subsequent Actions Since

[ACTION]: Approve public statement from the Washington New Members Committee re: the July 2026 Bar Examination Disruptions and Subsequent Actions Since

Pursuant to WSBA Bylaws Article IV.E, the WNMC is requesting approval from the WSBA Board of Governors to publish the attached statement to the public, regarding the July 2026 Bar Exam disruption.

Background

The Washington New Members Committee responded to the July 2026 Bar Exam disruptions caused by technology failures and the lack of backup materials, which resulted from the NCBE’s decision to use only digital exams.

This affected applicants in Washington and nationwide. The committee and ABA Young Lawyers Division quickly advanced a resolution calling for contingency plans, thorough technology testing, and protections for disabled test takers. They urge the NCBE to provide paper exams, support fee reimbursement for affected applicants, and recommend diploma privilege for those who attempted the exam to restore fairness and trust.

Community Input

The Washington New Members Committee notes that its recommendations—such as advocating for diploma privilege and reimbursement of fees—are based on commentary received from the new member community and careful consideration of those perspectives. This indicates that the committee incorporated feedback and concerns from affected applicants and the broader legal community into its response and proposed solutions.

Attachments

Washington New Members Committee Public Statement

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

August 5, 2026

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON NEW MEMBERS COMMITTEE PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING THE JULY 2026 BAR EXAMINATION DISRUPTIONS AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS SINCE

Recent events involving the administration of the Washington bar examination resulted in significant disruption for applicants, the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA), and the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE). These events highlighted the absence of adequate contingency protocols for technology-dependent examination administration.

However, we recognize that words of comfort are simply not enough, and decisive action is needed to prove WSBA is worthy of the trust our new members and aspiring applicants had placed in us. Therefore, the Washington New Members Committee issues the following statement to provide an update on the recent bar examination disruptions affecting Washington Bar applicants and to outline actions taken in response.

Cause of Examination Disruption

Based on the publicly available information, it's our understanding that the primary disruption was related to the venue's technological capabilities and a failure of appropriate testing of that infrastructure beforehand. However, the disruption was further amplified by limitations on available contingency resources. The NCBE's decision to administer the NextGen Bar Exam exclusively through technology-dependent means, without supplying paper-based backup materials to WSBA proctors, restricted options for mitigation during the incident. It appears to us, this decision was made based on NCBE's intellectual property considerations, without concern for the effects it may have on not only Washington examinees, but those nationwide.

Delegation Activity

Members of the Washington Delegation to the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD) Assembly—Mason Ji, Janta Steele, Ashley Cummins, Ariel Cook, Mackenzie J. Lloyd, and Collins Saint—collaborated on an expedited basis to prepare and advance Emergency Resolution 26-13YL. The resolution was submitted to the ABA House of Delegates for consideration following accelerated development and deliberation. That resolution was subsequently passed by the ABA House of Delegates as Resolution 405.

Summary of Emergency Resolution 26-13YL

Emergency Resolution 26-13YL:

1. Calls on Bar associations and relevant leadership to establish jurisdiction-specific contingency plans and ensure they are operational in the event of substantial technological failure during examination administration;
2. Perform full-scale end-to-end testing and validation prior to the examination to assess a test site's technological infrastructure, and;
3. Requests thorough consideration of the disparate impacts and potential necessary protections needed for test takers with disabilities, through inadvertent disclosure of their status.

Committee Position

On a nationwide policy level: The Washington New Members Committee urges the NCBE to ensure that Bar



associations are equipped with essential contingency measures for future examination administrations so that disruptions of this nature do not recur. At minimum, the committee calls on the NCBE to prepare and provide jurisdictions with paper versions of the NextGen Bar Exam, at minimum, to provide the most basic of contingencies that would have helped avoid this catastrophic situation. The committee also supports and thanks the ABA-YLD Assembly and the ABA House of Delegates for passing Emergency Res. 26-13YL/Res. 405.

On a state-wide level: The Washington New Members Committee is first and foremost a body meant to present and represent the views of the new member community, in which we consider the aspiring July 2026 Bar Applicants. At minimum, the committee supports full reimbursement of all related application and examination fees (including the NCBE technology fee) to applicants who were unable to complete the July 2026 Bar Exam.

Further, based on the commentary we have received from our community and after careful consideration, the committee recommended that the Washington State Supreme Court grant diploma privilege to all examinees who registered, qualified for, and attempted to sit for the July 2026 Bar Exam¹; assuming completion of all other requirements including Character & Fitness and passing the Washington Law Component.

Regardless of the cause of this catastrophic failure, at the end of day, we recognize that the responsibility of the bar association to ensure a fair and equitable admission process is of paramount importance. We only hope that our recent actions and participation in future discussions can help repair the trust lost between WSBA and the legal community at-large.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alexander R. Reaganson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Alexander R. Reaganson
FY 26 Chair, Washington New Members Committee
On Behalf of the Full Committee

¹ Including those who have completed the APR 6 Law Clerk Program.

Subject: [External]September bar exam and technology
Date: Friday, August 7, 2026 at 10:23:54 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: nberg1
To: Board Feedback

You don't often get email from nberg1@uw.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear WSBA,

My name is Natalie Berg and I was present in Yakima, ready to take the Bar last week. I would really like to take the bar exam in September, but I am very concerned about the technical issues that happened. I would like to know more about what steps you have taken to investigate what went wrong in Yakima, and what steps will be taken to ensure that the same issues do not occur in Tacoma in September. I would also like assurances that there is a backup plan in place, perhaps paper and pencil, to guarantee that we will be able to take the test in September no matter what.

Natalie

August 7, 2026

Board of Governors
Washington State Bar Association
1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98101

Re: Request for WSBA Recommendation to Modify Order No. 25700-B-753, Extend Equal Relief to Repeat Applicants, and Support Fair and Proportional Alternative Remedies

Dear President, Members of the Board of Governors, and Executive Director:

I respectfully thank the Washington State Bar Association for its efforts in responding to the unprecedented technological failure that prevented the majority of applicants from taking the July 2026 NextGen Uniform Bar Examination. I also appreciate the WSBA's continued commitment to assisting affected applicants and working with the Washington Supreme Court to ensure a fair resolution.

I respectfully ask the WSBA to recommend that the Washington Supreme Court reconsider or modify one aspect of Order No. 25700-B-753: the exclusion of applicants who had previously taken and not passed a United States bar examination.

I am one of those applicants.

I previously sat for the February 2026 Washington Uniform Bar Examination. Like every other July 2026 applicant, I satisfied all eligibility requirements, successfully completed the WSBA's eligibility and character and fitness review, paid all required fees, devoted months to preparation, reduced my work hours to study, and traveled from Seattle to Yakima prepared to take Washington's first administration of the NextGen Bar Examination. Through no fault of my own, I was denied the opportunity to demonstrate my competence because the examination could not be administered.

I respectfully request that the WSBA recommend reconsideration of the exclusion of repeat applicants for the following reasons.

1. Every Applicant Approved by the WSBA Was Equally Qualified to Sit for the July 2026 Examination

Before arriving in Yakima, every applicant—including repeat applicants—completed the legal education required by Washington, satisfied the WSBA's eligibility requirements, passed the character and fitness review, paid all required fees, and was approved by the WSBA to sit for the July 2026 examination.

Once the WSBA approved an applicant, every applicant occupied the same legal position. The only remaining step was the successful administration of the examination.

2. Prior UBE Performance Is Not a Reliable Measure of an Applicant's Ability to Succeed on an Entirely New Licensing Examination

The July 2026 administration was Washington's first NextGen Uniform Bar Examination. Although some applicants had previously taken the Uniform Bar Examination (UBE), **no applicant had previously taken the NextGen examination**. Every July 2026 applicant therefore entered the examination under identical circumstances as a first-time NextGen examinee.

There is no evidence demonstrating that prior UBE performance predicts performance on the inaugural NextGen examination. Accordingly, prior UBE history bears little relationship to the unprecedented circumstances that gave rise to the Court's emergency order.

3. Risk of Non-Passage Exists for Both New Takers and Retakers

Although historical pass rates may show a higher risk of non-passage among repeat applicants, **neither repeat nor first-time applicants were guaranteed to pass the July 2026 NextGen examination**, and not all first-time applicants ordinarily pass. Because the examination was cancelled, no one can know which individual applicants would have passed; moreover, some applicants may voluntarily choose the September examination to obtain a portable NextGen score. Therefore, offering diploma privilege as an **option to all WSBA-approved applicants**, rather than categorically excluding repeat applicants, would provide a fairer and more individualized remedy.

4. The Technological Failure Affected Every Applicant Equally

The technological failure did not distinguish between first-time applicants and repeat applicants. It did not distinguish between J.D. graduates, LL.M. graduates, APR 6 Law Clerks, foreign-

trained lawyers, attorneys admitted in other jurisdictions, or applicants who received testing accommodations.

Every applicant experienced the same uncertainty, emotional distress, financial loss, professional delay, and interruption of career plans because of the same institutional failure.

5. Repeat Applicants Suffered the Same Financial, Professional, and Emotional Harm

Like every other applicant, repeat applicants invested months preparing for the July examination. Personally, I paid the required WSBA and NCBE fees, purchased commercial bar preparation materials, reduced my work hours for several months, traveled from Seattle to Yakima, and incurred transportation and hotel expenses.

Because the examination was cancelled, I continue to incur additional financial costs for continued preparation and replacement of expired study resources. I also continue to experience emotional distress, uncertainty, and anxiety regarding the reliability of future examinations and the impact this unprecedented failure has had on my professional future.

6. The Distinction Is Unrelated to the Reason Relief Was Granted

The Court granted relief because qualified applicants were denied the opportunity to complete the examination through no fault of their own.

Respectfully, prior bar examination history did not contribute to the technological failure and bears little relationship to the purpose of the Court's remedy. Every applicant approved by the WSBA lost the same opportunity to demonstrate competence because of the same institutional failure.

7. The 2020 Diploma Privilege Order Did Not Expressly Exclude Repeat Applicants

To the best of my understanding, the Washington Supreme Court's 2020 diploma privilege order did not expressly exclude applicants solely because they had previously taken a United States bar examination. The principal concern in 2020 involved eligibility language relating to educational pathways. The current order creates a new distinction by excluding repeat applicants despite their having satisfied the same WSBA admission requirements and having been equally affected by the July 2026 examination failure.

8. Equal Treatment Best Serves Fairness and Public Protection

Every applicant approved by the WSBA had already satisfied Washington's educational, eligibility, and character and fitness requirements before the examination failed.

Treating similarly situated applicants equally would promote fairness, preserve public confidence in the attorney licensing process, and recognize that every affected applicant was prevented from demonstrating competence because of the same unprecedented institutional failure.

9. Alternative Recommendations

If the Washington Supreme Court is not inclined to extend diploma privilege to all repeat applicants, I respectfully ask the WSBA to recommend one or more equitable alternatives.

I. Individualized Review

Rather than categorically excluding all repeat applicants, applicants who previously demonstrated substantial competence—including those who scored **50 percent or more** or otherwise demonstrated legal competence—could receive individualized review.

II. Supervised Practical Legal Training

Applicants could complete **two to three months of supervised legal practice** under a licensed Washington attorney, judge, prosecutor, public defender, legal aid organization, government legal office, or other approved legal employer. Certification by the supervising attorney would provide an objective demonstration of competence while continuing to protect the public.

III. A Different and Proportional September 2026 Examination

If another examination is required, the September 2026 examination should be **materially different** from the cancelled July 2026 examination. A different examination would help eliminate concerns regarding potential question exposure, preserve confidence in the examination process, and ensure fairness for all applicants.

The examination should also be **proportional** to the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the July cancellation. The WSBA could recommend reasonable modifications that recognize the months of preparation applicants had already completed while maintaining minimum competency standards and protecting the public.

IV. Reliable Technology and Uniform Testing Conditions

Any future examination should be administered only after the testing platform has been independently validated and demonstrated to be reliable. Applicants should receive uniform testing conditions, effective contingency planning, and reasonable assurances that similar technological failures will not recur.

Conclusion

The July 2026 NextGen Bar Examination failed because of unprecedented technological problems, not because applicants failed to satisfy Washington's standards for admission. Every applicant whom the WSBA approved was equally qualified to take the examination and was equally prevented from demonstrating competence through no fault of their own.

I respectfully submit that these findings apply equally to repeat applicants. The technological failure did not distinguish between first-time applicants and repeat applicants, and I respectfully ask the WSBA to recommend that the Washington Supreme Court modify its order so that the remedy reflects the same principle.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the WSBA recommend that the Washington Supreme Court modify Order No. 25700-B-753 to extend equal relief to all applicants approved by the WSBA to sit for the July 2026 Washington NextGen Bar Examination, regardless of prior United States bar examination history. Alternatively, I respectfully ask the WSBA to recommend one or more of the equitable alternatives described above to ensure that qualified applicants are not unfairly disadvantaged because of an institutional failure beyond their control while continuing to protect the public and maintain confidence in Washington's attorney licensing process.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration, your leadership during this unprecedented situation, and your continued service to the legal profession and the people of Washington.

Respectfully submitted,

Gizachew Belete

Applicant, July 2026 Washington Bar Examination

Seattle, Washington

mitkugizachew@gmail.com

(206) 460-9173

Subject: [External]Fwd: Concerns about groups not receiving diploma privilege
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 11:15:42 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Jennifer Gary
To: Board Feedback

You don't often get email from jennifer_gary@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am forwarding this letter I wrote to the Deans of the three Washington law schools. The letter was written with permission from my son, David Gary, to discuss his personal information.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns,

Respectfully,

Jennifer Gary

----- Original Message -----

From: Jennifer Gary <jennifer_gary@comcast.net>
To: "lawdean@gonzaga.edu" <lawdean@gonzaga.edu>, School of Law Dean
<lawdean@uw.edu>, "avarona@seattleu.edu" <avarona@seattleu.edu>
Date: 08/06/2026 11:11 PM PDT
Subject: Concerns about groups not receiving diploma privilege

Dear Deans:

I am writing to voice concerns about the Washington State Supreme Court's decision, expressed in the WSBA's email today, to grant certain groups of the July 2026 applicants diploma privilege while denying it to other groups: namely, those with accommodations who completed the examination; those who have previously failed the examination; and those who did not attend an ABA accredited law school. My husband and I are 1982 graduates of the UW School of Law who passed the bar exam in July 1982. My husband is a current member of the Bar Association. I have switched careers and am no longer a member.

Background

Our son, David Gary, falls into two of the groups mentioned above. He required accommodations; and he has previously failed the bar exam. I write with his permission to discuss personal information.

In June of 2022, the summer between his 2L and 3L years at Seattle University, David fell and struck his head on a rock while backpacking, suffering what medical providers thought would be a fatal traumatic brain

injury (TBI). He was airlifted to Harborview Medical Center where he required two emergency craniectomies and spent time in the neuro intensive care unit. He spent most of the summer as an inpatient at Harborview Medical Center and in inpatient rehabilitation. His medical team and our family did not think he could or should return to law school in the Fall, but he was determined to graduate on time and fulfill his long-time goal of public criminal defense work. He started his third year of law school shortly after regaining communication abilities and beginning to walk again. He dealt with a multitude of medical and cognitive issues during his 3L year. A few of his professors knew the full extent of his injuries, but many did not know how serious and life changing his injuries were. Despite the incredible struggles, David graduated with his class in May 2023 and even received a Cali award in his Criminal Motions class.

When David graduated from law school, faculty recommended that he not take the bar examination right away. They recognized his need to work on his recovery and regain strength and stamina. David's recovery has been ongoing, which is typical of TBI survivors, especially those with severe TBIs such as his.

Concerns Regarding Fairness

My concerns about the fairness of the Court's decision are threefold:

1.) Absence of anonymous grading.

The WSBA Policies on Admission state:

"B. Grading and Results for All Examinations (1) Grading of examinations shall be anonymous. Graders shall be provided exam answers with **only** the applicant ID number to identify to whom the answer belongs. Names **or other personal information that would identify an applicant is not provided to the graders.** All information matching names and numbers of the applicants shall be kept in the custody of the Bar until all examinations have been graded and each examination has been given either a pass or fail grade by applicant number only."

(Emphasis added)

Only three groups will submit tests to be graded for Fall 2026: those with accommodations who completed the examination in July 2026; those who have previously failed and will sit for the examination in September; and those who have not attended an ABA accredited law and will sit for the examination in September. While graders will not know applicants' names, *they will know very important personal information about them*, including that they likely have a disability requiring accommodations or have previously failed the bar exam. It is possible a grader will be able to identify an applicant by virtue of being in one of these three groups. For example, there were only 15-20 applicants with accommodations who took the July 2026

bar examination.

2.) Creation of conscious or unconscious bias

The Deans of the law schools in Washington State have placed much emphasis on how hard the applicants have worked to prepare themselves for the bar examination and how much they have sacrificed to prepare. All have argued for diploma privilege with the underlying assumption that applicants worked hard and would pass. I cannot help but wonder if this lack of presumption of preparedness for those who have previously failed the bar exam will adversely influence graders. *By not granting diploma privilege to those who have previously failed the bar examination, the Court is potentially creating bias, whether conscious or unconscious*, that those who previously failed were not well prepared, had not sacrificed and are not deserving of the presumption that they would pass.

3. Lack of consideration for individual's circumstances

David's TBI recovery has taken years. He sat for the February 2026 bar examination and scored exceptionally high on the essay portion of the exam but missed passing the overall exam by two points. He continued to study hard for the July 2026 exam and felt as prepared as other candidates. It feels unfair that the Supreme Court is suggesting that he and others who previously sat for, but failed to pass the exam, are not deserving of the same presumption of preparedness that is being granted to others. *The Supreme Court's decision to deny diploma privilege to those who previously failed to pass the bar exam paints applicants with too broad of a brush. It does not examine the reason(s) for a past failure and does not recognize the skills, commitment, compassion and life experiences that a person with medical, financial, family or other concerns can bring to the legal profession.*

Proposed remedy

There is no perfect solution to this unfortunate situation, but the cutting and dicing of applicant groups in terms of who is granted diploma privileges and who is not, according to the supposed categories of merit, does not protect the applicants' anonymity in the grading process as required by WSBA's own policy, has the potential to create bias, does not take account of the individuals' specific circumstances, and hereby is fundamentally unfair.

I respectfully and earnestly argue that if any applicants who registered and were present for the July 2026 Yakima bar exam be granted diploma privilege, that all such applicants be treated the same and not selectively treated differently based on supposed categorical distinctions.

Best regards,

Jennifer Gary

Subject: [External]Written Comment for Discussion Tomorrow - Students with Accommodations
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 9:59:46 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Jocema Bittencourt
To: Board Feedback

You don't often get email from jocemab@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

Considering that the WSBA's Board President stated the WSBA is interested in hearing from bar takers about their experience, below is a summary of the issues I faced while taking the exam as a student with approved accommodations. Please accept this as my written comment, which I hope will be addressed at tomorrow's meeting.

To the Board of Governors,

Thank you for gathering information from the students. Below is a summary of the technical problems I experienced during the three-day examination:

- On the morning of Day 2, I highlighted several questions so I could return to them later. When I reviewed them, some highlights had shifted, skipped words, or appeared in the wrong places.
- On Day 3, I began by analyzing the Multistate Performance Test (MPT). I used different highlighting colors to identify and organize different portions of my arguments in the several documents provided in the case library and created a detailed answer scheme establishing the skeleton of my motion/piece. I included the headings, subheadings, rule statements and also did text formatting (bold, capital letters, underline, etc.). My plan was to come back to it by the end of the day, during my last hour.
- I reserved the final hour to write the MPT response. When I returned to it, all the highlighting had disappeared, and the

formatting of my outline was heavily distorted.

- I reported the problem immediately and requested approximately 15–20 additional minutes to reconstruct the highlighting and outline. Staff said they could not restore the time. Their only proposed solution was another laptop, which would not have restored the lost work.
- I still had 11 minutes of break time, so I used that time to speak with administrators outside the testing room and formally report the problem.
- They said they opened a technical ticket but could not provide a ticket or reference number.
- When I asked how to follow up, they instructed me to contact Washington State Bar Association Admissions.
- I specifically asked them to document how seriously the problem had affected me, and they said they had done so.
- I returned to the examination and attempted to finish the MPT, but I ran out of time before completing it.
- I called Washington State Bar Association Admissions near 5:00pm that Thursday (right after I left the testing room, at 4:20pm) and left a voicemail detailing the problems I faced and asking for a call back.
- I called again on Monday several times (a total of 20 times). I even tried calling different WSBA departments to see if I could get a hold of someone. Not even the "wellbeing hotline" (or whatever they call it and advertised as being available to students in distress) answered. I left another voicemail restating what happened and asking how to proceed to open a formal complaint and for them to call me back.
- On the same day - Monday, Aug 03 - I sent WSBA admissions an email (see attached), asking for guidance on how to proceed.
- I never got a response.

Although I technically completed the examination, I did not receive an uninterrupted or equivalent opportunity to complete it. The fact that I remained in the testing room until time expired should not mean that these problems are disregarded.

I hope these details are useful as you determine what to include in any request to extend the Court's relief. I believe all affected candidates should be allowed to choose, before results are released, between the examination waiver and having their examinations graded.

Jocema Bittencourt

P.S.: I acknowledge that I was able to finish the exam, but I also think that students with accommodations were forced to continue while the other students could benefit from an additional month to study, which seems inequitable. I was never given the choice to stop testing and opt to test with everybody else in September. And giving diploma privilege solely to those who were unable to test adds to the unequal treatment.

<mime-attachment>

Subject: [External]Request for Reconsideration of WSSC Exclusion of Accommodated July 2026 NextGen UBE Testers
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 9:55:17 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Alan Clay
To: Board Feedback

You don't often get email from aclay2@seattleu.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

I am concerned about the recent decision by WSSC to remedy the July 2026 NextGen UBE debacle.

Its current scope (1) creates significant privacy violations and (2) unfairly penalizes accommodated examinees who tested under severely compromised conditions.

1. The Order Inadvertently Discloses Accommodation Status

Restricting diploma privilege to non-test-takers while forcing accommodated examinees to wait for October 9 score releases effectively outs students who received testing accommodations. If students are not waived into the bar Oct 09 , 2026, it will be understood that the student received accommodations and failed (or failed the 2025 bar). This distinction publicly compromises applicants' statutory medical privacy, disability protections, and academic information under the privacy act before employers and peers.

2. Extreme Conditions Prejudiced Accommodated Examinees

Conditioning testing on inadequate logistics defeated the purpose of reasonable accommodations because: (1) **Severe Fatigue:** Students granted time-and-a-half tested for 4.5 continuous hours, received as little as five-minute lunch breaks, and were required to return immediately to testing rooms. (2) **Exhaustive Schedules:** Sessions ended after 7:00 PM, forcing physically exhausted candidates to return early the next morning for Day 2. I did not experience this but many others have and their stories were not heard by the WSBA.

These punitive conditions impaired cognitive performance, making the resulting scores an inaccurate measure of legal competence.

A February Retake Is an Inadequate Remedy

Offering a February 2027 retake fails to remedy administrative defects. Forcing candidates to undergo another exam cycle delays licensure, jeopardizes employment offers, and increases financial hardship without addressing the July administration's failures.

A reasonable remedy would be either (1) or (2) and (3)

(1) Extend privilege to first-time examinees who sat for the July 2026 exam under documented accommodations or administrative disruptions **or**

(2) Establish Case-by-Case Review process allowing impacted candidates to petition for bar admission based on academic record, character and fitness, and documented testing irregularities; **and**

(3) ensure the WSBA releases all scores timely and simultaneously.

Respectfully,

Alan B. Clay, III

2026 JD Graduate

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

Subject: [External]RE: Input for the August 7 Board Meeting — Affected July 2026 Applicant
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 9:54:21 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Kim
To: Board Feedback

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Dear Members of the Board of Governors,

I am one of the applicants who traveled to Yakima to sit for the July 2026 bar examination, was unable to do so, and has since returned home to Seoul. Having sat for a bar examination once before, in 2025, I fall within the group of applicants who, under the Court's August 6 order, are not eligible for a waiver and whose only paths forward are the September 2026 or February 2027 administrations.

Let me begin by thanking the Association for its efforts on behalf of all applicants affected by this failure. I understand that the Board is not the body that decides questions of admission, which rest with the Court. But because the Board is positioned to offer its views to the Court, and has said it is considering the matter of applicants' costs, I would respectfully raise two requests.

First, I would ask that the Board urge the Court to reconsider the distinction that excludes repeat applicants from the waiver. On July 28, every applicant in Yakima — first-time and repeat alike — stood in the same position: prepared, present, and prevented from testing by a failure that none of us caused. The distinction rests not on anything that happened that day, but on a past result. Yet Washington has already addressed this premise: in 2002, on the Board's own recommendation, the Court amended APR 4(c) to remove all limits on repeating the bar examination, concluding that the restriction "serves no useful purpose, and instead imposes an unnecessary restriction on some bar applicants." Washington thus decided long ago that a prior unsuccessful attempt says nothing disqualifying about an applicant. Moreover, the July 2026 exam was the inaugural administration of the NextGen Uniform Bar Examination; no one could have previously taken or failed it, and in that sense there were no repeat takers of this exam at all. Nor is the offer of a later exam a genuine remedy for everyone: for an applicant who cannot return to the same position they were in this July — one who traveled internationally, for instance — a retake may be an opportunity in form but not in substance. In light of these considerations, I would be grateful if the Board would convey to the Court that the different treatment of repeat applicants warrants a second look. As the 2002 amendment itself began with the Board's recommendation, the Board's voice may carry real weight here.

Second, I would ask that the Board consider reimbursement for the costs applicants have borne because of this technical failure. To sit in July, I traveled nineteen hours each way from Seoul and incurred the costs of an international flight, a week of lodging, a long-distance bus trip, and taxi fares, among others. Applicants admitted by waiver face none of this, while those of us directed to a later administration will incur much of it a second time. The applicants excluded from the waiver and required to test again are few, and those among them whose costs are especially high — as with an international journey — fewer still. To look after that small group would be consistent with the Association's stated commitment that this group of aspiring lawyers not be made to bear the burden of an administration failure. I would gladly provide documentation of my expenses if that would be helpful.

With renewed thanks to the Board and its staff for their work on behalf of all affected applicants during a difficult time, and for its consideration of these requests.

Respectfully,
Bo Young Kim

-----Original Message-----

From: "Board Feedback" <BoardFeedback@wsba.org>

To: "Kim" <winbykim@naver.com>;

Cc:

Sent: 2026-08-05 (수) 22:45:50 (GMT+09:00)

Subject: Automatic reply: [External]Input for the August 7 Board Meeting — Affected July 2026 Applicant

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback and for being an invested member of Washington's legal community. Your feedback is important to the WSBA Board of Governors and staff. The feedback you provide may be shared with the relevant parties, published in open meeting materials, referred to in public discussions, or as a public record, may be disclosed in response to a records request.

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From: David Gary <davidhgary@gmail.com>
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 7:55 PM
To: lawdean@gonzaga.edu <lawdean@gonzaga.edu>; School of Law Dean
<lawdean@uw.edu>; avarona@seattleu.edu <avarona@seattleu.edu>
Subject: Court's Decision on the July 2026 Bar Examination

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Hello to the deans of the Washington state law schools,

My name is David Gary. I am a graduate of Seattle University School of Law and received my Juris Doctor in May of 2023.

I write to you this evening to express my opinion about the Washington State Supreme Court's decision to not grant diploma privilege to those who have previously not passed the bar exam and want to express my own belief of how unjust I believe this decision is to not grant diploma privilege to all those who took this exam in July of 2026.

I was able to sit for and actually take the NextGen bar exam in Washington state in July of 2026. I was able to do this because of the accommodations I received from the WSBA and was not in the same building as where the technology issue occurred.

I have had to take this examination multiple times because of my disability and inability to pass a test like the bar exam. I was accommodated for this disability in my final year of law school and while I in no way believe it affects my ability to practice law and be an attorney, I am worried that admitting that I had to take the exam and had accommodations would hurt me in employment prospects. I do not believe the court's decision is correct and I would like to write as someone who has been drastically hindered by a disability to voice this.

In the summer between my 2L and 3L years, I sustained a nearly fatal traumatic brain injury on a backpacking trip and was picked up by helicopter by Navy search and rescue out of Whidbey Island to take me to Harborview Medical Center.

I had unresponsive pupils, no volitional movement, a large hematoma and contusion. I had such a large volume of blood pressing on my brain that my brain structures had significantly shifted. I have no memory of this day and was placed in a medically induced coma for 10 days after receiving two craniotomies to relieve the blood pressing on my brain. I had an incredibly severe midline shift in my brain due to blood in my skull and on seeing my CT scan from when I was admitted to Harborview trauma months later, about ¼ of my skull was filled with blood. I should have died from this accident.

My 3L year was marked by weekly appointments to occupational and physical therapy to relearn how to walk and reuse my right arm. Despite my struggles, I received a CALI award for Criminal Motions Practice that semester and was able to pass all my courses, taking a full course load while also working on a law journal. I graduated that following spring.

In the fall of my 3L, immediately after I was discharged from the hospital, I had a neuropsychology evaluation done at University of Washington Medicine. This evaluation concluded that my reasoning, rational thinking, and logic were sound if not exceptional, but my memory had been impacted from my TBI. My memory has improved significantly since my TBI. I am no longer walking with a cane, and have regained full motor function of both my right leg and my right arm. However, this accident still affects me and has affected my ability to pass the bar exam which has hindered me in getting my law license.

I find the court's reasoning unjust and I ask you all to stand as strong advocates for those like me, who have suffered tremendously, but were still able to receive their J.D.s and are unable to pass this exam because of a disability.

Please contact me if you have any additional questions.

Cordially,

David Henry Gary
(206) 817-9976
davidhgary@gmail.com

Subject: [External]Concerning the Yakima Bar Exam debacle
Date: Friday, August 7, 2026 at 8:58:15 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Karla Siebe
To: Bar Leaders

You don't often get email from karla@siebe.tv. [Learn why this is important](#)

The Supreme Court's decision to give a waiver to all first-time bar-takers but to require second-timers to take the test again is prejudicial and grossly unfair. The first-time takers who would likely have failed were given a free pass, while the second-time takers who were diligent and prepared by their previous experience were penalized. Additionally unforgivable is the fact that no financial compensation has been offered for hotels, travel, time-off-work, and meals thanks to the remote and untested location of the test. I feel this to be a case where our rule-makers with privileged lives wreak havoc on those who must struggle with money, time, and second languages. How can they possibly consider this to be justice?

Karla Siebe
Bellevue, WA 98008

Subject: [External]Request for Reconsideration of the Current Remedy
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 10:24:19 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: samiulla malang
To: Board Feedback
CC: sunitha@wsbalaw.org, hunter@wsbalaw.org, Terra Nevitt, alec@wsbalaw.org

You don't often get email from samiullam786@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Members of the WSBA Board of Governors,

I respectfully submit that the Washington Supreme Court described the current remedy as fair and equitable. However, I respectfully believe the eligibility criteria result in unequal treatment of similarly situated applicants.

Every applicant affected by the July 2026 cancellation experienced the same technology failure, the same disruption, and the same hardship.

The distinction between first-time and repeat applicants is not based on the impact of the cancellation, because every affected applicant was in the same position on the day of the exam.

There is no objective basis to assume that first-time applicants studied harder or invested more time than repeat applicants. Many repeat applicants, including myself, devoted months of continuous preparation and substantial financial resources.

The current eligibility criteria therefore create unequal treatment among applicants who suffered the same administrative failure through no fault of their own.

I respectfully request that the Board recommend reconsideration of the eligibility criteria so that all applicants affected by the July 2026 cancellation receive equal consideration.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Samiullah Malang

Washington State Bar Association
1325 Fourth Ave., Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98101-2539
Attn: Terra Nevitt
OGC@wsba.org
terran@wsba.org

The Honorable Chief Justice Deborah L. Stephens
Washington State Supreme Court
415 12th Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98501-6415
Supreme@courts.wa.gov

July 29, 2026

Sent via electronic mail only

RE: Diploma Privilege for All July 2026 Candidates Granted to Sit for the Bar Exam

Chief Justice Stephens,

This letter is to respectfully and urgently request admission by means of diploma privilege be granted to all APR Rule 6 Law graduates who were granted permission to sit for the July 2026 NextGen Bar Exam yesterday at the Yakima Convention Center.

Yesterday, hundreds of other law graduates and I prepared for, paid for, and were granted to sit for the July 2026 NextGen Bar Exam held in Yakima, WA. Through no fault of our own and after six hours of sitting and waiting, we were sent home due to Wi-Fi connectivity and the NCBE Secure Browser technological issues. Since the WSBA knew well in advance what the requirements of this exam were and how many would be sitting for the exam, I find it astonishing that there were no other contingencies put into place should something like this happen. Now, the options proposed are a potential rescheduling of the exam in September 2026, to wait until February 2027 to take the exam, or to request a refund. ***These are not viable options.*** Not only do APR Rule 6 graduates work full time, many are single mothers, some are caring for other family members, and have families of their own to manage. We have spent thousands of dollars and taken weeks and months off of work to study for and prepare to take the bar exam. Taking another month off of work and adult life duties to study for a potential re-scheduling of the bar exam is not an option. The harms this has already caused is frankly unconscionable.

Unfortunately, APR Rule 6 law graduates are routinely treated as second-class graduates and discriminated against. In 2020 when diploma privilege was granted due to COVID under extreme hardship, the APR 6 graduates were purposely denied diploma privilege. The marginalization of APR Rule 6 graduates is unacceptable and needs to end immediately. If the APR 6 Program continues to treat us as anything different than ABA law school graduates, they

really should think about just ending the program. What is the purpose of the program if we are treated less than? We have to study for and take the exact same bar exam as ABA law school graduates and all while working full time for a program of four years instead of three.

As is well known, there is a massive unmet need for attorneys in rural areas which is where many APR Rule 6 graduates live and work. All that we are asking for is to be treated with the same respect and equal treatment as the ABA law school graduates. I am doing what the law has taught us, which is to zealously advocate for people who are marginalized and treated as less than.

In closing, I thank you for your time and attention to this salient issue and respectfully and urgently request admission by means of diploma privilege be granted to all APR Rule 6 Law graduates who were granted permission to sit for the July 2026 NextGen Bar Exam.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at smatheny80@hotmail.com or (509) 952-4332.

Respectfully,

s/Sarah M. Matheny

Sarah M. Matheny

APR Rule 6 Law Clerk Graduate

s/Cinthia Piedra

APR Rule 6 Law Clerk Graduate

s/Ann Dorn

APR Rule 6 Law Clerk Graduate

s/Wendy M. Fox

APR Rule 6 Law Clerk Graduate

s/Maricielo Yvette Tamayo

APR Rule 6 Law Clerk Graduate

s/Marisol Garcia

APR Rule 6 Law Clerk Graduate

s/Susan O'Brien

APR Rule 6 Law Clerk Graduate