



Board of Governors Meeting Recap

May 1-2, 2026

A summary prepared by the WSBA of the Board of Governors (Board) meeting held May 1-2, 2026, in Wenatchee, WA. The agenda, materials, and video recording from this Board meeting are posted online. The next regular meeting is July 23-24 in Tulalip. The Board is the WSBA's governing body charged with determining general policies of the WSBA and approving its annual budget. To subscribe to the Board Meeting Notification list, email barleaders@wsba.org.

Law Day: Calling All Legal Ambassadors (that's YOU)! The Board commemorated Law Day on May 1 by announcing a joint campaign between the WSBA, Washington Supreme Court, and [Lawyers in the Classroom](#) program. We are asking every legal professional to take a pledge to be in a classroom on—or around—Constitution Day (Sept. 17), bringing the nation's founding document to life for the next generation of leaders. Take the pledge now, and we will wrap you in support in the coming weeks as you connect with a teacher and prepare to engage with students. "As a legal community, we feel deeply compelled to respond to a rise in civic cynicism, and one of the most meaningful and hopeful ways we can do so is by speaking to the next generation of leaders," said Chief Justice Debra Stephens. "Legal professionals witness the Constitution's real-world application and promise every day, and that's the perspective we can bring to the classroom. We want every student to understand their power, because the Constitution and the future belong to them."

- [Watch the Law Day press event at the Temple of Justice](#)
- [Watch Justice Mungia talk about the power of lawyer volunteers in classrooms.](#)
- [Take the pledge!](#) We started strong on Law Day, but we can do better—let's get hundreds and hundreds of volunteers in classrooms next September!

Congratulations to Newly Appointed Officers and Governors. The Board selected District 10 Governor Nam Nguyen as incoming president-elect, to serve as WSBA president for the 2027-2028 term. ([See page 185.](#)) Because no candidates filed in the recent election for expiring governor terms, the Board selected two individuals to serve in those seats until the next election cycle: Norma Linda Urefia for District 7-North and Qian "Sophi" Ying for District 8. They will serve terms beginning Sept. 26, 2026, and ending in September 2027. The Board also selected Min K. Kang to fill the remainder of Governor Kari Petrasek's term. She will vacate her District-2 seat in September when she becomes president. Incoming Governor Kang's term will begin Sept. 26, 2026, and run through September 2028. ([See page 193.](#))

Supporting Member Well-Being as a Strategic Goal. The Well-Being Task Force delivered its final report—a comprehensive road map for improving the well-being of Washington legal professionals—after more than two years of widespread research and surveying. The report highlights five areas of recommendation:

1. Normalize help seeking.
2. Expand education and training.
3. Improve access to resources and protect confidentiality.
4. Build connection and mentoring at scale.
5. Pursue structural and policy reforms.

[Read the entire report on the task force's webpage.](#) WSBA leaders will now determine how to implement the recommendations and then return to the Board with specific policy questions. The report makes clear, and Board members agreed, that one of the most important elements of implementation will be collaboration with legal professionals and different communities to ensure solutions are inclusive and well understood.

Local Hero. The WSBA named [David J. Bentsen](#) a Local Hero, an honor bestowed by the WSBA President in partnership with county bar associations to recognize colleagues who make noteworthy contributions to their communities. David was nominated by Chelan-Douglas County colleagues for his vital leadership role within the legal community and his prolific volunteer work, including with Chelan-Douglas Volunteer Attorney Services and the Wenatchee Valley Senior Center.

Regulatory Proposals Regarding Bar Exam and Admissions. The Board considered several recommendations to amend Admission to Practice Rules (APR) and WSBA Bylaws that relate to Bar admissions and licensing. ([See page 135.](#)) The amendments seek to:

- Eliminate the expiration of bar exam scores and remove the requirement to pass the bar exam for a current WSBA member returning to active status. (Discussion and first reading.)
- Eliminate outdated and exclusionary language and reduce the active legal experience required for a lawyer from a common law jurisdiction to sit for the bar exam. (Discussion and first reading.)
- Amend the definition of active legal experience. (Discussion and first reading.)
- Change the definition of approved law schools. (Approved by the Board.)
- Adjust the application deadlines to administer the LPO exam on the first Monday in October and April (instead of aligning the deadline to lawyer bar exam) and add one additional late filing deadline for the NextGen bar exam. (Approved by the Board.)
- Expand the pool of examiners on the Board of Bar Examiners from 50 to 75 members to support grading of the NextGen exam and portfolio review for the experiential alternative to the bar exam. (Approved by the Board.)

An Updated Professional Oath? The Chair of the [WSBA Oath Review and Drafting Task Force](#) presented an interim report. The task force formed in July 2025 to consider the preadmission oaths taken by licensed legal professionals in Washington and, as appropriate, to make recommendations to update and reinvigorate the content of those oaths. To date, the task force has examined the history and content of oaths in Washington and throughout the nation, conducted surveys, and formed two subcommittees: a Subcommittee on Revision of Existing Oath Provisions and a Subcommittee on Potential New Oath Provisions. Stay tuned for more information as the task force develops its recommendations and seeks feedback from members along the way. ([See page 254.](#))

Washington State Bar Association

Sara Niegowski, Chief Communications Officer, saran@wsba.org

The Board also:

- Approved a \$0 Client Protection Fund Assessment for 2027 and \$5 for 2028, as recommended by the Budget and Audit Committee after careful consideration of the current level of the fund and historic range of gifts made from it annually. The Court will consider the recommendation for approval as part of the annual license fee. ([See page 356.](#))
- Approved the slate of candidates—as recommended by the DEI Council—for a Board of governor at-large position, to go before members in an election beginning May 15. ([See page 441.](#))
- In response to a request to delegate authority to the Court Rules and Procedures Committee for initial prescreening of proposed rule changes under GR 9(f)(2), requested a draft of a committee charter that would reflecting the proposed delegation. ([See page 361.](#))
- Received confirmation that the [Board's comment](#) on a Department of Justice proposed rule, “Review of State Bar Complaints and Allegations Against Department of Justice Workers” has been publicly posted. The delay was due to the DOJ having to respond to more than 1 million comments.
- Approved a new member of the Washington State Bar Foundation Board of Trustees. ([See page 263.](#))

Incoming Treasurer. Congratulations to [Governor Nam Nguyen](#), whom the Board elected as the WSBA's next Treasurer for FY 2026.

Expanding the License Fee Exemption Based on Financial Need. The Board discussed a proposal that will expand the current license-fee hardship exemption in three ways: (1) increase the number of times a member is eligible for the hardship exemption from two to three; (2) raise the eligibility threshold from 200% of the federal poverty level to 270% of the federal poverty level; and (3) change the name from “Hardship Exemption” to “License Fee and Assessment Exemption Based on Financial Need.” The Board expects to vote on this proposal in September. ([See page 197.](#))

OTHER BUSINESS

Local Hero. The WSBA recognized retired prosecutor [James Nagel as a Local Hero](#), an honor bestowed by the WSBA President in partnership with county bar associations to recognize colleagues who make noteworthy contributions to their communities. James was nominated by the Walla Walla County Bar Association for his almost four decades of service to the prosecutor's office as well as his longtime volunteerism with the local Kiwanis Club and Walla Walla County Fire District 4.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and License Fee Policy. The Board of Governors discussed the first draft of next fiscal year's budget, which is built on a \$10 increase in the active-attorney license fee (the first increase since 2020) to maintain regulatory programs and services. The Board also approved a [policy and process they will use now and in the future for setting the annual license fee](#): A market factor (COLA) will be considered each year to ensure the license fee is keeping track with the changing value of the dollar; then the Board will adjust the fee, depending on anticipated changes in revenues, expenses, reserve funds, and program needs. (See page 151.)

Bylaw Amendment to Young Lawyer Title and Definition. The Board supported a recommendation from the Washington Young Lawyer Committee (WYLC) that would change

the WSBA Bylaws in two ways: The term “young lawyer” would change to “new member,” and a “new member” would include any member within their first 10 years of licensure in Washington state. The current definition encompasses only the lawyer license type with an eligibility cap of 36 years of age or five years of practice in Washington. The WYLC’s recommendations are the result of years of research, surveying, and discussion about how to expand the committee’s eligibility parameters to include all members who might most benefit from its programs and services. The proposal will now go to the Court for consideration. ([See page 380.](#))

Policy Change to Allow Sections to Purchase Alcohol. The Board approved a change to the WSBA fiscal policy to allow sections to use section funds to purchase alcohol at their events. The recommendation came from the WSBA’s Member Engagement Council, which responded to considerable feedback and requests from sections. ([See page 216.](#))

Revised Legislative Policy and Procedures. The Board considered a recommendation to amend WSBA’s policies regarding legislative activities to align with evolving interpretations of relevant rules and caselaw. The recommendation, from the Board of Governors Legislative Committee, consolidates current legislative policies and distinguishes WSBA legislative activity from law-improvement, when WSBA members respond to lawmakers on technical aspects of proposed bills. The Board expects to take action on the proposal in September. ([See page 570.](#))

The Board also:

- Held a moment of silence to honor and remember [Retired Washington Supreme Court Justice Charles K. Wiggins](#).
- Held a strategic planning retreat the day prior to the business meeting.
- Approved a charter for an Oath Review and Drafting Task Force, which is expected to begin work in FY 2026. In the wake of this year’s local [Law Day \(May 1\) ceremonies around the state at which hundreds of lawyers gathered to retake the Oath of Attorney](#), President Sunitha Anjilvel recommended that the WSBA initiate a project to update and reinvigorate the professional oaths prescribed by Admission and Practice Rule 5. We are now recruiting interested members for the task force; [applications are due Friday, Aug. 8.](#)
- Recommended a schedule for application fees and annual fees for the Entity Regulation Pilot Project, to go to the Washington Supreme Court for consideration. [More about the Entity Regulation Pilot Program.](#) ([See page 203.](#))