

Supreme Court Work Group to Review WSBA Structure

Subject: FW: Public Comment

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To: Structure Workgroup <StructureWorkgroup@wsba.org>

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This email might come off more spiteful than I intend. I apologize for that. I try hard to make venting both rare and productive, and I think I can do so here. To the extent that I don't, feel free to ignore what I say.

Having graduated in 2009, smack in the middle of the recession, and having been underemployed in document review for years after (my current position does a lot of lawyer things but is paid and classified as a paralegal), I've never been the socioeconomic status *NW Lawyer* is writing to, whether in its default culture ("Lawyers, here's what's important to your culture") or its default counterculture ("Lawyers, your culture is hurting X and Y group"). The impression I've gotten, first from the Alabama Bar from 2009-16 and then here from 2016 forward, is that I'm at the kids' table of the profession while a bunch of high-disposable-income adults have status fights and social justice fights and now bar implosion fights.

One of my own outlook maxims is that any organization, given enough time, confuses its existence with its mission. Churches start repaving parking lot every three years instead of helping orphans; nonprofits find more reasons to funnel funds to administration; homeowner associations find more types of offensive lawns and decorations to maintain the precious "character of the neighborhood"; and so on. In thinking through how this might affect the legal profession, it's clear to me that I have no idea what you think your core function is. If *NW Lawyer* is to be believed, it's urging a worldview and some cursory topical education. If regulating Washington lawyers is a core function, I don't have the faintest idea after ten years in bar associations what that really means, drowned out as it is by word count in magazines about everything else.

And given how much money I have given to join bar associations and stay in them – money I have often had to ask for as birthday money to stay in the profession, money I wish could go to my loans or getting a car newer than 1996 – the only things I know for sure I've gotten is a series of magazines, worse finances, and the message that I'm incurably "other," much as I get throughout life. (This is **not** what I get from the work itself, incidentally – I have been appreciated richly, far above what I deserve.) The only person in either Alabama or Washington bar leadership who I felt I could be real with was Robin Haynes, so...I'm jaded again. My current representative (the outgoing Dan in District 9) has never sent an email to District 9 members asking us what we think; I looked into being a District 9 candidate to rectify this lack of input, but I don't necessarily have the vacation time/money/reliable transportation to go to the meetings across the state for years.

If you want to continue being a mandatory association, don't talk about what great services you have offered to many; show us what services are **necessary** and how you are fulfilling them better than the state Supreme Court would fulfill them. Everything after that is camouflage, whether subconscious or conscious. Neither I nor anyone else can contest you have been useful over the years, but that's not the question before the Court or bar members. The question is whether the WSBA's current structure is **necessary** such that fees should be **mandatory**, and I can't say that I have any evidence to that effect.

Core regulatory functions are boring to discuss and don't make for an exciting magazine, but they're why the WSBA exists in theory. Does it take \$500 per lawyer per year to administer those? I can't imagine it does, but I don't know where I'd begin to research that either. Frankly, a profession full of people trained to think and talk doesn't need an official voice in any capacity; we collectively and individually have plenty of voice. What we need is to know why you

have to continue existing as you currently exist – not just for the default settings of the profession and its culture, but for every paying member as well as the public.

Thank you,



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