

Oath Review and Drafting Task Force

Meeting Agenda

August 17, 2026 – 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order & Opening Ceremonies
2. Special Report: Rectifying the Dehumanization of Indigenous People in State Legal Systems. Presenter: Justice Steven Gonzáles
3. Reading and Approval of Minutes of July 20, 2026 Meeting
4. Meeting Materials: AAmended Oath Charter and Rectifying the Dehumanization of Indigenous People in State Legal Systemsl Systems
5. Report and Discussion:
 - a. V3 Working Draft of Revised Oath
 - b. Alternative Oath Drafted by Hunter Abell
6. Discussion of Next Steps: Stakeholder Outreach
7. Open Forum
8. Announcements
9. Adjourn

OATH REVIEW AND DRAFTING TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

July 20, 2026

The meeting was held in-person and remotely via Zoom.

Members present were Rajeev Majumdar (Chair), Kyle Sciuchetti, Roger Wynne, Angela Balconi, and Hunter Abell. Also present were Matthew Dresden (Liaison to the Board of Governors), David Ward (Principal Legal Analyst, AOC), Steve Crossland (Chair of the Limited License Legal Technician Board), Doug Ende (WSBA Chief Disciplinary Counsel, and Rachel Agent (WSBA Disciplinary Program and Systems Manager).

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

1. Agenda Overview and Reading and Approval of Minutes of June 15, 2026 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. The minutes of the June 15, 2026 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

2. Report and Discussion: Memo and Second Working Draft of Revised Oath

The Chair presented and the Task Force members discussed the second working draft of the oath, with a view towards circulating the draft to stakeholders for comment. Task Force members present raised a number of concerns. It was pointed out that Limited Practice Officers do not “represent” clients in the sense that lawyers do, so that language would not work for the LPO license type. It was noted that the draft oath contained more paragraphs than the current oath and was too ornate. It was suggested that the Task Force prepare two versions for stakeholder consideration: the working draft and a significantly shortened draft. There was an unopposed request to rearrange section one of the revised oath to place “education of the public” after the other listed responsibilities. Hunter Abell agreed to draft a single paragraph draft revised oath for review by the Task Force at its next meeting.

The Chair asked Chief Disciplinary Counsel Doug Ende to gather more information about the term “representation” as applied to Limited Practice Officers.

By consensus, the Task Force agreed to postpone further discussion and editing to a future meeting at which more Task Force members could be present.

3. Discussion of Next Steps: Stakeholder Outreach Proposal

Discussion of stakeholder outreach was postponed pending further discussion of the content of the draft revised oath. The Chair requested that Task Force members review the list of stakeholders and identify those they would take a lead role in communicating with.

4. Announcements

Rachel Agent will reach out to the Task Force members to ascertain availability for the next meeting, currently scheduled for August 17th.

5. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

CHARTER

Oath Review and Drafting Task Force

Adopted: July 18, 2025.

Extended July 24, 2026.

Background

Oaths of legal practitioners in the state of Washington are found in Admission and Practice Rule (APR) 5. There is an Oath of Attorney, as well as corresponding Oaths for Limited Practice Officers (LPO) and Limited License Legal Technicians (LLLT).¹ Taking the oath is a preadmission requirement for each license type, and the oath, in most cases, must be taken in person, by telephone, or by videoconference before an elected or appointed judge sitting in the state of Washington.² The Oath of Attorney has been a component of the Admission and Practice Rules (formerly known as the Rules for Admission to Practice) since 1938. The oath adopted by the Supreme Court was based on the statutorily prescribed oath first adopted by the Washington Legislature in 1917, though language used in the oath appears to date back to Territorial laws enacted in 1863. The Oath of Attorney has been amended from time to time,³ but much of the language that remains is derived from the statute. The Oath for LPOs was added to the APR in 2017, formerly appearing in the Regulations of the APR 12 Limited Practice Board; it was initially adopted in 1987 as part of the former Rules for Admission and Certification to Limited Practice. The Oath for LLLTs was adopted in 2012.

Task Force Purpose and Responsibilities

The Oath Review and Drafting Task Force is established to evaluate whether WSBA should suggest the Supreme Court amend Washington State's APR 5 oaths in ways that would update and reinvigorate them. Should the Task Force recommend amendment of the oath, it shall prepare draft amendments for the Board of Governors' consideration. In performing these responsibilities, the Task Force shall proceed according to the following objectives and guidelines.

- The Task Force shall communicate about its process with members and the public and seek input. The Task Force shall, in particular, obtain advisory perspectives from stakeholder groups with an interest in the content of the oath, including new and young lawyers; senior lawyers; the access-to-justice community; the judiciary; law schools and law students; Inns of Court; WSBA Sections; and county, affinity, and specialty bar associations.
- The Task Force shall gather and review historical materials about the development of Washington State's oaths, as well as perform a comparative analysis of the oaths in use by other jurisdictions.
- The Task Force shall consider whether it is advisable to consolidate the three existing oaths into one oath.
- The Task Force shall, in considering the content of the oath, recognize that violation of the oath can be a basis for discipline in Washington. See RPC 8.4(k); LPORPC 1.10(e); LLLT RPC 8.4(k).

¹ See APR 5(g), (h), (j).

² APR 5(f). Note that in June 2025, the Supreme Court adopted changes to the oath requirements in order to permit oaths to be taken by telephone or videoconference.

³ For example, in the 1950s, the Oath included the following language: "I am not now and never have been a member of any organization or party having for its purpose and objective the overthrow of the United States government by force or violence." See Ralph S. Brown & John D. Fassett, *Loyalty Tests for Admission to the Bar*, 20 U. CHI. L. REV. 480, 485 (1952-1953).

- The Task Force shall provide periodic updates to the Board of Governors about its progress.
- The Task Force shall ensure that its recommendations are consistent with WSBA's organizational parameters as defined in General Rule 12.2.
- The Task Force shall submit a final report to the Board of Governors, including, as appropriate, draft amendments to the oaths and related rules.

Timeline

The work of the Task Force shall be accomplished according to the following schedule:

- Begin meeting no more than six weeks after member and chair appointments are completed;
- Complete work and submit a final report not later than one year after the first Task Force meeting, unless the timeline for completion is extended by the Board;
- If the Board of Governors approves a recommendation to submit suggested amendments to the Supreme Court, prepare a set of suggested rule amendments and GR 9 materials for submission to the Supreme Court before the first GR 9 deadline after the draft amendments are approved.

Task Force Membership

The Task Force shall consist of the following voting members:

- An active WSBA member, not currently serving on the Board of Governors, who shall serve as Chair;
- Two current or former members the Board of Governors or WSBA officers;
- Six members of the WSBA, including at least one Limited Practice Officer or Limited License Legal Technician and a judicial member.

In recruiting and appointing voting members, consideration shall be given to diversity in a range of areas, including gender, ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, geography, areas of practice, and practice experience.

In accordance with WSBA Bylaws Art. IX(B)(2), selection of the chair and persons to be appointed to the Task Force will be made by the President with confirmation by the Board of Governors.

The Executive Director shall designate a WSBA staff liaison.

Meetings

The presence of a majority of Task Force members at a meeting constitutes a quorum. A quorum must be present at the time any vote is taken. Decisions of the Task Force shall be made by majority vote of members present at the time of the vote.

Extended Timeline

On July 24, 2026, the Board of Governors extended the deadline for completion of work and submission of a final report to May 1, 2027.

The Supreme Court
State of Washington

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TEMPLE OF JUSTICE
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98504-0929



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June 5, 2026

Sent Via E-Mail Only

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Amber Schulz-Oliver
Executive Director
Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
ambers@atntribes.org

Re: Rectifying the Dehumanization of Indigenous People in State Legal Systems

Dear Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Members of the Judiciary, and the Legal Community:

We acknowledge that Washington State is on the traditional land of Tribal and Indigenous people. We honor their homelands and express gratitude to the descendants of the land and the land itself.

In October 2024, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) called upon this court to issue a proclamation urging action by those in the legal and judicial system to rectify the historical and continued dehumanization of the Indigenous people in Washington State.

Today, we issue this letter in response. We acknowledge Washington's history of injustice towards Tribal and Indigenous communities and commit to continue taking steps to rectify past harms. We recognize that these communities have been vocalizing injustices for centuries.

We urge judges, the legal community, and lawyers to actively confront and rectify the historical and ongoing dehumanization of Indigenous people in Washington through their work, decisions, and daily practices.

We recognize that the history of this state, including state courts, is intertwined with racism and violence inflicted upon Indigenous people. This adversarial relationship began even before Washington was a state; with treaties negotiated under duress and the execution of important Tribal leaders.

We also recognize that history is reflected in our cities, towns, and communities. Thurston County, specifically, named after Samuel Thurston, reflects a racist legacy tied to rhetoric and actions that harmed Indigenous people. These legacies are not abstract. Native communities continue to face great systemic injustices from land dispossession, trauma from forced separation and incarceration through U.S. Indian boarding schools, overrepresentation in the child welfare, juvenile and criminal systems, higher rates of poverty, higher rates of missing persons, higher rates of sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls, and a lack of resources in education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

We recognize that at least 17 Indian boarding schools have been identified as operating in Washington between 1857 and 1932.¹ This legacy of separating Indigenous children from their parents continues. As of 2015, Indigenous children in our state were represented in foster care at a rate 3.6 times greater than the general child population of the state.²

We recognize that this legacy of harm manifests in other places. For every 100,000 Indigenous people across Washington, 88 go missing, which is nearly three times the statewide average for all people.³ Although Indigenous people make up only 2% of our population, they account for about 6% of the state's homicide victims.⁴ According to 2024 U.S. Census data, 19% of Indigenous people in our state reported living below the poverty line.⁵

We recognize that the dehumanization and discrimination of Indigenous communities in this state is not just the truth of the past but the reality of the present, including within our court system. Courts are where we hope people can come to seek redress. When those courts have been, and continue to be, inaccessible, harmful, and unjust for our Tribal communities, we must not just take accountability for the harm but strive to rectify it.

We take to heart Justice Montoya-Lewis's call to justice and accountability at this court's 2025 Minority and Justice Symposium,

As state actors we must understand at a fundamental level that Tribal sovereignty is not a gift that is given, but rather inherently rooted in centuries of self-governance...

State and federal systems have been responsible for grave injustices towards Tribal nations, through broken treaties and policies that have harmed generations of Native families... The harm continues to manifest itself in the disparities our communities face, including long-standing intergenerational trauma, cycles of violence and abuse, disappearance, premature deaths, and additional undocumented physiological and psychological impacts.⁶

This court has and will continue to take steps to rectify discrimination.

For example, in 2020, this court affirmed core provisions of the federal and Washington State Indian Child Welfare acts (ICWA and WICWA). We ruled that a "broad interpretation" must be used in determining whether children facing removal have Tribal heritage, citing the history of state-sponsored removal of Native American children and the destruction of Native families and communities.⁷

In 2021, this court began opening each new term with formal land acknowledgements. We understand, however, that symbolic acknowledgement without action is insufficient.

In June of 2025, the court joined with Squaxin Island Tribe Chairman Kris Peters in co-convening the first Tribal-Judicial Summit, with the goal of sharing knowledge of tribal culture and history with state court judges and building inter-government relationships.

In April of this year, this court entered an order establishing the Tribal State Court Consortium as a formal Supreme Court entity. The Consortium will continue to serve as a collaborative forum for state and Tribal judicial officers to foster mutual understanding and respect such that they can address evolving jurisdictional challenges, explore opportunities for shared solutions, and recommend educational opportunities that support culturally competent practices. This court has also acted through the recent Minority and Justice Symposium, the Tribal State Court Consortium, and traveling court.

We have been correcting offensive language in past decisions; language that was used to justify denying the recognition of treaty rights.

We have acknowledged opinions that erred by denying treaty rights. In 2024, our court recognized that a Yakama Nation member had a treaty right to hunt on open and unclaimed land and vacated Jim Wallahee's 1924 conviction.⁸ In 2020, our court recognized that a Yakama Nation member had a treaty right to fish in their usual and accustomed waters and vacated Alec Towessnute's 1916 conviction.⁹ Both decisions rebuked our court's prior use of infantilizing and dehumanizing language of Tribal people, while affirming Indigenous people's rights within Washington.

Our work will not end here. We acknowledge that these actions cannot undue centuries of harm and pledge ourselves to do more. We also call upon the bench and bar to actively address incorrect and harmful precedent, acknowledge conscious and unconscious bias, and change our judicial system to reflect a just reality for our Indigenous communities.

We cannot do this work alone and we cannot do it without the guidance of Tribal communities and Tribal courts. We look forward to strengthening those relationships, and relying on Tribal expertise, as we continue this work.

Sincerely,



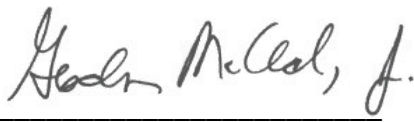
Debra L. Stephens, Chief Justice



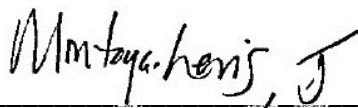
Charles W. Johnson, Justice



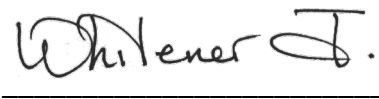
Steven C. González, Justice



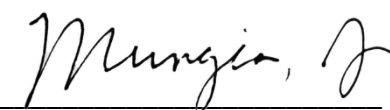
Sheryl Gordon McCloud, Justice



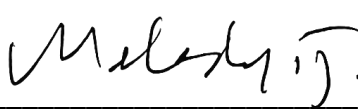
Raquel Montoya-Lewis, Justice



G. Helen Whitener, Justice



Salvador A. Mungia, Justice



Colleen M. Melody, Justice



Theodore J. Angelis, Justice

¹ *Missing children, unmarked graves, unanswered questions: Washington's Native American boarding schools*, KUOW (Aug. 15, 2024), <https://www.kuow.org/stories/missing-children-unmarked-graves-unanswered-questions-washington-s-native-american-boarding-schools>.

² *Racial Disproportionality in Washington State's Child Welfare System*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy (June 2008), https://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1018/wsipp_Racial-Disproportionality-in-Washington-States-Child-Welfare-System_Full-Report.pdf.

³ *Confronting the Crisis: Addressing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People in Washington Report*, Washington MMIWP Task Force (2025), <https://agportal-s3bucket.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/MMIWP%20Confront%20Crisis%20Report.pdf?VersionId=T4lILmzNVPPrJNr23yV1hszZyfgHQ4hfT>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Opportunity for many is out of reach: New data shows racial earnings gap worsens in Washington*, Economic Opportunity Institute (Oct. 14, 2025), <https://opportunityinstitute.org/blog/post/poverty-income-inequality-washington-census-data/>.

⁶ *TÁCEL SW SIÁM: A Call to Justice for Indigenous Peoples*, TVW (Jun. 11, 2025), <https://tvw.org/video/washington-state-supreme-court-minority-and-justice-symposium-2025061035/?eventID=2025061035>.

⁷ *Matter of Dependency of Z.J.G.*, 196 Wn.2d 152, 181 (2020).

⁸ *State v. Wallahee*, 3 Wn.3d 179, 181 (2024).

⁹ *State v. Towessnute*, 197 Wn.2d 574, 578 (2021).

REVISED OATH – THIRD WORKING DRAFT

July 20, 2026

1. I take this oath as I become a member of the legal profession in Washington with a special responsibility for the quality of justice, ~~the education of the public, and the ethical representation service to~~ clients, ~~and the education of the public.~~
2. I recognize that legal professionals, as guardians of the law, play a vital role in the preservation of society.
3. I recognize the unique history of the legal profession in Washington and the role of sovereign tribal nations and their legal systems.
4. I will uphold and defend the laws and constitutions of each jurisdiction where I practice law.
5. I will abide by our Rules of Professional Conduct.
6. I will maintain the respect due to legal tribunals, obey their orders and rules, and accept their appointments.
7. I will be honest and conduct myself with dignity, courtesy, and integrity.
8. I will support and defend our constitutional democracy, the rule of law, and our justice system.
9. I now accept these obligations and pledge to ensure meaningful access to justice for all.

ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION DRAFT OF REVISED OATH

I Swear or Affirm:

That I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Washington, abide by the Rules of Professional Conduct, and comport myself with honor, integrity, and decorum toward the court, counsel, parties, and public, in accordance with the highest traditions and standards of a [Washington State attorney/Legal Practice Officer/Limited Licensed Legal Technician.]

If we want to have a single oath for all licenses, an alternative ending could be “with the highest traditions and standards of a Washington licensed legal professional.”

Oath Review and Drafting Task Force

Draft Oath Engagement Plan

7.2026

Goal

Gather feedback and secure support for the task force's draft oath from the stakeholder groups named in the charter. Ideally, we will secure affirmative approvals from each stakeholder group to be included in our recommendation to the Washington Supreme Court.

Communication

Letter from Rajeev to distribution groups and contacts (below) to include:

- Reminder of the task force's purpose;
- Summary of survey results;
- Explanation of how the draft survey incorporates the survey results (both to change and not change the oath);
- Draft oath (and link to current oath for comparison);
- Request to answer two questions:
 - Feedback on the draft oath;
 - Does your organization support the recommendation to update the oath inline with the draft oath?
-

Distribution contacts and channels

New Member: Listserv available

- Washington New Members Committee:
 - Chair Alexander Raymond Reaganson
 - Northwest Justice Project- Vancouver, 1104 Main St Ste 500, Vancouver, WA 98660-2972
 - alexander.reaganson@nwjustice.org
 - Immediate Past Chair Mason Ji
 - Perkins Coie, 1301 2nd Ave., Ste 4200, Seattle, WA 98101-3804
 - mji@perkinscoie.com
 - Staff liaison: Chelle Gegax Michelleg@wsba.org
 - Board liaison: Jordan Couch Jordan@palacelaw.com

Senior Lawyers: Listserv available

- Senior Lawyers Section
 - Chair David Sprinkle
 - Fidelity National Financial, 701 5th Ave., Ste 2700, Seattle, WA 98104-7054
 - david.sprinkle@fnf.com

- Immediate Past Chair Carole Grayson
 - 4100 50th Ave S., Seattle, WA 98118-1235
 - cag8@hotmail.com
- Staff liaison: Carolyn MacGregor Carolynm@wsba.org
- Board liaison: Parvin Price lparvinpricebog@gmail.com

Access to Justice Communities: Listserv available

- ATJ Board
 - Chair Mike Chin
 - Seattle Office for Civil Rights, 810 3rd Ave Ste 750, Seattle, WA 98104-1627
 - mike.chin@seattle.gov
 - ATJ Board staff liaison: Diana Singleton (dianas@wsba.org) and Bonnie Sterken (bonnies@wsba.org)
 - ATJ Board liaison: Chris Bhang chrisbhangbog@gmail.com

Judiciary

- AOC Administrator
 - Dawn Marie Rubio
 - Administrative Office of the Courts, PO Box 41170, Olympia, WA 98504-1170
 - dawnmarie.rubio@courts.wa.gov
- Superior Court Judges Association
 - President Hon. Cindy Larsen
 - Snohomish County Superior Court, 3000 Rockefeller Ave M/S 502, Everett, WA 98201-4046
 - cindy.larsen@snoco.org
 - Superior Court Judges Association
 - PO Box 41170, Olympia, WA 98504-1170
- District and Municipal Court Judges Association
 - President Anita Crawford-Willis
 - Seattle Justice Center, PO Box 34987, Seattle, WA 98124-4987
 - anita.crawford-willis@seattle.gov
 - DMCJA
 - DMCJA, Administrative Office of the Courts, PO Box 41170, Olympia, WA 98504
- Office of Administrative Hearings
 - Chief Administrative Law Judge RaShelle Davis
 - Office of Administrative Hearings, PO Box 42488, Olympia, WA 98504-2488
 - rashelle.davis@oah.wa.gov
- Washington Department of Licensing
 - Chief Law Judge Marguerite Friedlander
 - 1514 Brighton Way SE, Olympia, WA 98501-8618
 - mfriedland@dol.wa.gov
- Federal Judges
 - Eastern Washington: Chief Judge Stanley A. Bastian
 - PO Box 2706, Yakima, WA 98907

- Stan_Bastian@waed.uscourts.gov
- Western Washington: Chief Judge David G. Estudillo
 - U.S. District Court Clerk's Office, 700 Stewart Street, Suite 2310, Seattle, WA 98101
 - david_estudillo@wawd.uscourts.gov

Law Schools and Students

- Gonzaga University
 - Dean Jacob Rooksby
 - Gonzaga University School of Law, 721 N. Cincinnati Street, PO Box 3528, Spokane, WA 99220-3528
 - lawdean@gonzaga.edu, rooksby@gonzaga.edu
- Seattle University
 - Dean Tony Varona
 - Seattle University School of Law, 901 12th Avenue P.O. Box 222000, Seattle, WA 98122-1090
 - avarona@seattleu.edu, gharrington@seattleu.edu
- University of Washington
 - Dean Tamara Lawson
 - University of Washington School of Law, William H. Gates Hall, Box 353020, Seattle, WA 98195-3020
 - Tamara Lawson lawsont@uw.edu, Nikole Blue nblue@uw.edu
- Law Clerk Board
 - Chair Christell Casey
 - The Law Offices of Julie C. Watts PLLC, 505 W Riverside Ave Ste 210, Spokane, WA 99201-0518
 - christell@watts-at-law.com
 - Staff liaison: Kat Skinner katherines@wsba.org
 - Board liaison: Mary Rathbone mmrbog4d@gmail.com

Affinity Bar and Specialty Bar Associations

- Access through the WSBA's affinity-bar leader listserv (Sara will distribute)

County Bar Associations

- Access through WSBA's county-bar leaders listserv (Sara will distribute)

Inns of Court

- Hon. Robert J. Bryan American Inn of Court
 - President Indu Thomas
 - Thurston County Superior Court, 2000 Lakeridge Dr SW, Olympia, WA 98502-6045
 - indu.thomas@co.thurston.wa.us
- William L. Dwyer American Inn of Court
 - President Nyjat Rose-Akins

- Seattle City Attorney's Office, 4310 SW Cambridge St. Seattle, WA 98136-2649
- nyjat45@yahoo.com
- The George & Donald Simpson American Inn of Court
 - President Chad Sleight
 - Clark County District Court, 1200 Franklin St., Vancouver, WA 98660-2812
 - chad.sleight@clark.wa.gov
- Seattle Intellectual Property American Inn of Court
 - President Caroline Bercier
 - Amazon Web Services, 2121 8th Ave., Seattle, WA 98121
 - bercier@amazon.com

Limited Practice Board (can email entire universe of license holders)

- Chair Angie Balconi
 - Chicago Title Insurance Company, 3002 Colby Ave., Ste 200, Everett, WA 98201-4080
 - angie.balconi@ctt.com
- Staff liaison: Cathy Biestek catherineb@wsba.org
- Board liaison: Tom Ahearne ahearne@foster.com

Limited License Legal Technicians (can email entire universe of license holders)

- Chair Stephen Crossland
 - Crossland & Evans PLLC, PO Box 566, Cashmere, WA 98815-0566
 - steve@crosslandlaw.net
- Staff liaison: Cathy Biestek catherineb@wsba.org
- Board liaison: Kristina Larry kristina@sassylitigations.com

OATH REVIEW AND DRAFTING TASK FORCE

WORKING DRAFT OF OATH TALKING POINTS

- In the wake of the May 1, 2025, Law Day ceremonies around the state where hundreds of lawyers gathered to retake their professional oath, many noticed the pronounced length of the oath, as well as the dissonance of some of its archaic phraseology.
- At the July 2025 Board of Governors meeting, the Board formed a Task Force known as the Oath Review and Drafting Task Force, and at the August 2025 meeting, approved appointment of nine members consisting of Rajeev D. Majumdar (Chair), Hunter M. Abell (former BOG member), Angela J. Balconi (LPO member), the Hon. Rebecca R. Glasgow (judicial member), Courtney Hudak (member at-large), Professor Monte Mills (member at-large), Kyle D. Sciuchetti (former BOG member), the Hon. James Smith (judicial member), and Roger D. Wynne (member at-large).
- Key elements of the Task Force Charter are as follows:
 - The Task Force shall communicate about its process with members and the public and seek input.
 - The Task Force shall, in particular, obtain advisory perspectives from stakeholder groups with an interest in the content of the oath, including new and young lawyers; senior lawyers; the access-to-justice community; the judiciary; law schools and law students; Inns of Court; WSBA Sections; and county, affinity, and specialty bar associations.
 - The Task Force shall gather and review historical materials about the development of Washington State's oaths, as well as perform a comparative analysis of the oaths in use by other jurisdictions.
 - The Task Force shall consider whether it is advisable to consolidate the three existing oaths into one oath.
- The Board directed the Task Force to complete work and submit a final report within one year of its initial meeting. The initial meeting of the Task Force took place on October 31, 2025. The Task Force has held seven meetings-of-the-whole.
- In November 2025, the Task Force Chair directly sought advisory perspectives from a broad range of members and stakeholder groups, including from representatives of all groups spelled out as priority stakeholders in the Charter.
- The Task Force compiled, reviewed, and discussed information about the history of the Washington state oaths. During this phase of its work, the Task Force learned, among other things that:

- Washington’s Oath of Attorney has roots going back to Washington’s territorial period and influenced the creation of the ABA Model Oath;
- the Oath of Attorney was first codified by statute in 1909 (repealed 2023);
- the Washington Supreme Court adopted the Oath as a court rule in 1954; since its inception, the oath has been amended a number of times;
- since the turn of the second millennium, the WSBA twice proposed amendments to the Oath (in 2001 and 2016), but neither proposal was adopted by the Supreme Court;
- the Oath for Limited Practice Officers was adopted in 1987, and the Oath for Limited License Legal Technicians was adopted in 2012.
- The Task Force prepared a compilation of oaths of attorney from jurisdictions throughout the United States and evaluated information based on a comparative analysis of U.S. oaths. During this phase of its work, the Task Force learned, for example, that:
 - By word count, Washington state’s oath of attorney is the fourth longest oath in the United States, exceeding the median word count by 115 words;
 - Washington state is one of nine U.S. jurisdictions that includes an “offensive personality/personalities” clause.
- The Task Force assembled and reviewed academic and professional literature on the history of oaths of attorney, which often includes suggestions for oath modification and improvement.
- Between January and March 2026, the Task Force conducted a broadly distributed membership survey seeking opinions about the current oath and potential change to the oath from each license type: lawyer, LPO, and LLLT. Launch of the survey was supported by publication of a Guest Column in the Bar News. See Rajeev D. Majumdar, To Bind Our Profession: The Nature of Our Oath, Washington State Bar News Vol. 80, No. 2, at 12 (Feb. 2026), among other outreach efforts.
- Survey data showed that:
 - a majority of lawyers and LLLTs responding to the survey favored revising the oath;
 - a significant majority of LPOs favored revision;
 - there was a notable difference in opinion about revising the oath based on years in practice, with lawyers in practice for 31 years or more tending to oppose revision and lawyers with fewer than 31 years in practice tending to favor it.
- The Task Force approved formation of two subcommittees: a Subcommittee on Revision of Existing Oath Provisions and a Subcommittee on Potential New Oath Provisions.

- Considering the recommendations of both subcommittees, the Task Force prepared and approved a Working Draft of an amended oath for consideration by members and stakeholders.
- The starting point for the Working Draft was the current Oath of Attorney, which consists of eight paragraphs and 272 words.
- The draft took into consideration data yielded by the Task Force survey, commentary shared in the survey and via direct stakeholder input, suggestions received during the Chair's April 2026 interim report to the Board of Governors, provisions in use by other U.S. jurisdictions, academic and professional literature on oaths of admission, a careful reading of the Preamble to the Rules of Professional Conduct, as well as its prologue, the Fundamental Principles of Professional Conduct, and the principle that the oath should use contemporary, accessible language comprehensible by all.
- The Working draft Consists of nine paragraphs and 171 words.
- The Working Draft is suited to being administered to all Washington license types, lawyers, Limited Practice Officers, and Limited License Legal Technicians.
- More information about the work of the Task Force can be found on its [web page](#), along with a dedicated email address to receive input from stakeholders: oathtaskforce@wsba.org.

1. After the May 1, 2025 Law Day oath retaking events, many lawyers noted the length and outdated language of Washington’s attorney oath.
2. The WSBA Board of Governors created the **Oath Review and Drafting Task Force** in July 2025 and appointed nine diverse members in August 2025.
3. The Task Force’s charter requires broad communication, stakeholder input, historical research, and comparison with oaths used in other jurisdictions.
4. The Board directed the Task Force to complete its work within one year; the group began meeting on October 31, 2025, and has met seven times. (There is a pending request to extend the completion deadline to May 1, 2026.)
5. In November 2025, the Chair sought advisory perspectives from all priority stakeholder groups identified in the charter.
6. Historical research revealed Washington’s oath dates to the territorial era, was initially adopted legislatively, has been repeatedly amended, and includes separate oaths for attorneys (adopted by court rule in 1954), LPOs (1987), and LLLTs (2012).
7. Comparative analysis showed Washington’s oath is one of the longest in the U.S. and one of nine including an “offensive personality” clause.
8. The Task Force conducted a statewide survey (Jan–Mar 2026) that showed most lawyers, LPOs, and LLLTs support revising the oath, with newer lawyers more likely to favor change.
9. Two subcommittees drafted recommendations that led to a Working Draft consisting of nine paragraphs and 171 words—shorter, modernized, and suitable for all license types.
10. The Working Draft reflects survey data, stakeholder feedback, comparative research, and core principles from the Rules of Professional Conduct; additional information and feedback channels are available on the [Task Force webpage](#).