

# WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

## CIVIL RIGHTS LAW SECTION **Bylaws**

As last amended and approved by the  
Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors on January 16, 2026.

### ARTICLE 1. NAME AND MISSION

The name of this section is the Civil Rights Law Section (the “Section”). The mission of the Section shall be to educate and advocate for civil liberties and equal rights in the context of civil rights law and the legal issues of Washington State residents, with particular focus on those who have traditionally been denied such rights and equal treatment under the law including, but not limited to, racial, ethnic, or religious minorities; elderly; gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered; immigrants; mentally or physically disabled; impoverished; and homeless.

### ARTICLE 2. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 2.1 **Establishment and Limitations.** The Section is hereby established pursuant to the Bylaws of the Washington State Bar Association (hereinafter referred to as the “Bar”). These Bylaws are subject to WSBA Bylaws and policies, and to court rules that apply to the WSBA.
- 2.2 **Purpose.** The Section will be concerned with all aspects of law and policy related to the improvement of the legal practice in the substantive area of civil rights law, which includes, but is not limited to violations of rights provided under the constitutions of United States and Washington state, under federal and state statutes, local laws and regulations; criminal harassment, hate crimes; and immigration matters. The Section will provide continuing legal education on civil rights law to its voting and non-voting members and all interested persons. The Section will provide a network for communications with the civil rights organizations throughout the State. The Section will submit, to the Board of Governors or other appropriate Bar entity, recommendations concerning proposed legislation or court rules that impact legal practice in the area of civil rights.
- 2.3 **Principal Office.** The principal office of the Section shall be maintained in the office of the Bar.
- 2.4 **Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the Section shall coincide with the fiscal year of the Bar.

## ARTICLE 3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 **Voting Members.** Any Active member in good standing of the Bar, Emeritus Pro Bono member (APR 8(e)), professor at any Washington law school (whether licensed in Washington or not), House Counsel (APR 8(f)), or any lawyer who is a full time lawyer in a branch of the military who is stationed in Washington but not licensed in Washington, may be enrolled as a voting member of the Section upon request and payment of annual Section dues.
- 3.2 **Subscribers.** Any other interested person may become a non-voting subscriber of the Section and serve as a non-voting member of Section committees and subcommittees upon payment of annual Section dues. The Section will welcome advocates from all interested disciplines. Law Students may be non-voting Section members at a standard annual dues fee set by the Board of Governors of the Bar.
- 3.3 **Dues.** Dues shall be paid annually in an amount to be established by the executive committee, which is described in these bylaws, Article 5, Executive Committee, and approved by the Board of Governors of the Bar. Any person who fails to pay the annual dues shall cease to be a member of the Section. Changes in dues shall be effective for the fiscal year immediately following such determination.

## ARTICLE 4. MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 **Annual Meetings of the Membership.** The annual meeting of the Section shall be held at a time and location determined by the executive committee and the meeting schedules and contact information will be made reasonably available by the Bar consistent with the Bar Bylaws.
- 4.2 **Other meetings** may be held at a time and place designated by the Chair or a majority of the Executive Committee. The membership shall be notified of the date and location of a special meeting and this information will be made reasonably available to the members consistent with the Bar Bylaws.
- 4.3 Notice of the annual meeting and any other meetings shall be published in the Section newsletter and/or transmitted by mail or electronic mail to all members of the Section and made reasonably available to the public by the Bar prior to the meeting.
- 4.4 Approval of any business brought before the membership at any annual or other meeting of the Section shall be made by a majority vote of the voting members present in person, telephonically, or by videoconference or who have submitted ballots by mail or electronic mail prior to the meeting date.
- 4.5 Members may cast their vote by mail, or by electronic mail, or may appear telephonically or by videoconference with written notice to the Secretary of the Section.

## ARTICLE 5. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

5.1 **Scope.** The Section executive committee shall supervise and control the affairs of the Section subject to these bylaws and the Bar's Bylaws. The executive committee shall be vested with the powers and duties necessary for the administration of the affairs of the Section including, without limitation, the power and duty to act on behalf of the Section in connection with the activities listed in §2.2. The Section executive committee shall have authority to approve the content and publishing of the Section newsletter and/or website, and the adoption of the budget in consultation with the Bar and approval of expenditures consistent with the budget, and shall perform duties assigned to it by the Board of Governors of the Bar.

5.2 A. **Elected Members of the Section Executive Committee.** The members of the Section executive committee will be elected from the voting Section membership to fill the following positions:  
Chair  
Chair-elect  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Up to five (5) At-Large members

B. **Immediate Past Chair.** Upon conclusion of the Chair's term(s), the former Chair will subsequently serve as the Immediate Past Chair and will have a voice and vote on all matters that come before the Section executive committee provided that they are still a member of the Section and until conclusion of the succeeding Chair's term. In the event that the Immediate Past Chair is no longer willing and/or available to service in that capacity, the executive committee may at its discretion fill the vacancy of immediate Past Chair with a Former Chair willing to serve in the position. The Immediate Past Chair shall be a full voting member for purposes of establishing a quorum of the Section executive committee.

C. **New Member Liaison.** Upon the concurrence of a majority of the elected members of the Executive Committee, a New Member Liaison may serve on the Section executive committee. The New Member Liaison to the Section executive committee shall have a voice and vote on all matters that come before the Section executive committee, and shall be a full member for purposes of establishing a quorum of the Section executive committee.

5.3 **Term.** All executive committee positions will begin October 1 each year. The term for officers shall be for one year. The terms of the At-Large members will be for three years and shall be staggered as evenly as possible. Only voting members may serve on the Section executive committee.

5.4 **Regular Meetings.** The Section executive committee shall meet at least every two months, a minimum of six times per year.

5.5 **Special Meetings.** The Chair may, and upon the request of three members of the executive committee, shall, call meetings of the executive committee. Special meetings

of the executive committee may be called to amend these bylaws upon ten (10) days written notice of such meeting mailed to the members thereof, said notice to specify the purpose of such special meeting and the proposed amendment, as set forth in Article 10 hereof. Written notice of such meeting may be waived by one-hundred percent of those entitled to notice, by written waiver thereof. All other meetings shall be as set by the Chair of the Section.

5.6 **Quorum.** A majority of the voting members of the Section executive committee shall constitute a quorum, and may be present in person, by telephone or by videoconference. Action of the executive committee shall be determined by majority vote of the voting members of the executive committee present once a quorum is established. Executive committee members may vote by email in accordance with the Bar's Bylaws.

5.7 **General Section Member Voting.** The Section executive committee may direct that a matter be submitted to the members of the Section by a mail or electronic vote or by a vote at the Section annual meeting; in any such event, binding action of the Section shall be by majority of those voting.

5.8 **Committees and Subcommittees.** The Section executive committee shall have the authority to determine the number and type of Section committees and Section subcommittees and shall appoint Chairs for all committees and subcommittees. All members of the Section may serve on any committee or subcommittee at the discretion of the Section executive committee.

5.9 **Compensation.** No salary or compensation for services shall be paid to any member of the Section executive committee or member of any committee with the exception of the Editor and other staff of the Section newsletter (if applicable). Reimbursement may be allowed for travel and other out-of-pocket expenses for members of the Section executive committee and members of all Section standing and special committees, pursuant to the WSBA expense reimbursement policy.

5.10 **Section Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of the Section executive committee shall be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Section. Special meetings may be held at the time and place designated by the Chair or a majority of the Section executive committee.

5.11 **Rights of Section Members.** The voting membership of the Section shall have the right to rescind or modify any action or decision by the Section executive committee, except for filling a vacancy in the position of officer or executive committee member, and also may instruct the Section executive committee as to future action. The Section executive committee shall be bound by any such action of the membership. The rights of the membership to direct, modify, or rescind an act of the Section executive committee shall not include the power to invalidate contracts or payments previously made under direction of the Section executive committee. Any vote to direct, modify, or rescind an action of the Section executive committee must be taken at a meeting at which two-thirds of voting members voting approve the Motion.

## ARTICLE 6. COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES

- 6.1 **Purpose.** The purpose of the committees shall be to further the interests of the Section within their particular areas of expertise, in coordination with the Section Chair and subject to control of the executive committee.
- 6.2 **Standing Committees.** The Section executive committee may establish as many standing committees as deemed necessary and may set the names, functions, and duration of such committees. The Section Chair, with the approval of the Section executive committee, shall appoint the committee director and members of all standing committees.
- 6.3 **Special Committees.** In addition to the standing committees provided above, the executive committee may appoint as many special committees for particular purposes as deemed appropriate; and may set the names, functions, and duration of such committees, including membership. The Section Chair, with the approval of the Section executive committee, shall approve the appointment of the committee director and members of all special committees.
- 6.4 **Subcommittees and Task Forces.** Subcommittees and task forces, as constituted from time-to-time by the executive committee, shall be filled by appointment of the Section Chair with the consent of the executive committee.

## ARTICLE 7. ELECTIONS

- 7.1 No member may serve as an Officer on the Section executive committee for more than four (4) consecutive years.
- 7.2 To the extent possible, no more than one person from the same law firm, company or department of a public agency may serve on the executive committee at the same time.
- 7.3 No officer shall serve more than two successive terms in the same office.
- 7.4 The Chair-elect, Secretary, and Treasurer, and At-Large members to fill vacant or expiring terms, shall be elected every year during the annual election. Nominations and elections for open executive committee positions will be held between March and May each year.
- 7.5 All executive committee positions will begin October 1 each year.
- 7.6 **Nominating Committee.** The executive committee shall appoint a nominating committee for the specific purpose of recruiting and recommending candidates for Section officers and At-Large executive committee members. The nominating committee shall have no less than three members, at least one whom should not be a current member of the executive committee. The nominating committee shall make and issue a report to the executive committee at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual election, containing at least one nomination for each position to be filled by

election. The executive committee will also have an alternative process to allow for nominations to occur outside of the nominating committee process.

- 7.7 All applicants will apply through an electronic process administered by the Bar. The nominating committee shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that the members nominated reflect the diversity of the Section membership taking into account all relevant factors, including without limitation, practice area, office location, age, gender and ethnic origin.
- 7.8 The nominating committee may nominate more than one candidate for each position. Written notice containing the names of nominees selected by the nominating committee shall be provided to voting members of the Section via email or published in the Section newsletter no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the election. The notice shall include an invitation for further nominations from members of the Section.
- 7.9 The notice shall include the names of persons nominated, the positions to which they have been nominated, and a statement that members of the Section may nominate or self-nominate persons to serve in any of these elected officer positions by written nomination to the nominating committee.
- 7.10 To be accepted, nominations from members must include the name of the person nominated, the position for which he or she is nominated, and if not a self-nomination, written acknowledgement by the nominee of his or her willingness to serve.
- 7.11 The executive committee will approve a list of nominees for each open position.
- 7.12 The Bar will administer the elections by electronic means and certify the results, unless the Section develops its own equivalent electronic election process. In the event of a tie, the winner will be determined by a coin toss.
- 7.13 Any member of the executive committee may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the executive committee. Grounds for removal include, but are not limited to, regular absence from executive committee meetings or events (failure to attend three (3) consecutive meetings, in the absence of an excuse approved by the Chair prior to the meeting, or failure to attend four (4) consecutive meetings, even if excused), failure to perform duties, unprofessional or discourteous conduct or whenever, in the executive committee's judgment, the executive committee member is not acting in the best interest of the Section membership.
- 7.14 Except for the office of Chair-elect, a majority of the Section executive committee shall fill by appointment, for the unexpired portion of any term, any position that becomes vacant for any reason.
- 7.15 When a member is appointed to fill a vacancy in an unexpired term, the member will do so until the next annual election when an individual will be elected to serve the remainder of the vacated term. Such appointed members are eligible at the next annual election for election for a full term, unless the member's election to the new term will result in a violation of Sections 7.1, 7.2 and/or 7.3 of this Article.

## ARTICLE 8. PUBLICATIONS, A/V MATERIALS and WEBSITE

- 8.1 **Newsletter.** There shall be published and furnished to members of the Section, and to such other persons or organizations as the executive committee may determine, an electronic newsletter published at such intervals as the executive committee shall determine.
- 8.2 **Other Publications.** The Section may publish a series of programs and/or other written or A/V material to further the objectives of the Section.
- 8.3 **Publication Editor.** The Chair shall appoint annually an editor of the newsletter and/or website who may be, but need not be, a member of the executive committee, but who is a member of the Section.

## ARTICLE 9. AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 **Amendments.** These bylaws may be amended by either of the following means: (1) at any annual meeting of the Section by a majority vote of the voting members of the Section present in person, by telephone, or by videoconference; and (2) at any regular or special meeting of the executive committee of the Section called for the purpose of amending the bylaws upon at five (5) days written notice to the members thereof, by a majority vote of the voting Executive Committee members once a quorum is established. No amendment of these bylaws will be effective until approved by the Board of Governors of the Bar.

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As last amended and approved by the Bar Board of Governors on January 16, 2026. Previously amended on September 23, 2010, September 29-30, 2016, and July 27, 2017.