

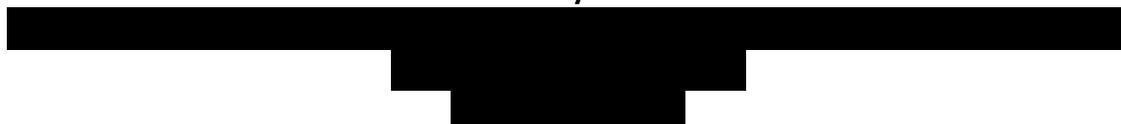
# Oath Review and Drafting Task Force

## Meeting Agenda

February 23, 2026 – 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

In person: Washington State Bar Association  
1325 Fourth Ave., Suite 600, Seattle, WA 98101-2539

Or remotely via Zoom:



1. Call to Order & Opening Ceremonies
2. Reading and Approval of Minutes of January 12, 2026 Meeting
3. Special Guest Presentation: Erin Overbey, King County Prosecuting Attorney and Immediate Past President of the King County Bar Association, author of "[Keeping the Oath: A Promise to Defend the Constitution in a Defining Moment](#)" and "[Thank You for Your Support](#)"
4. Report: Meeting Materials
  - [Rule 9.7 of California Rules of Court](#) (requiring each active licensee to declare adherence to the oath on an annual basis)
  - Hugh C. Todd, [The Meaning of a Lawyer's Oath of Office](#), 12 Wash. L. Rev. & St. B.J. 174 (1937)
  - Ron D. Bryant, [Kentucky and the Code Duello](#) (2005) (from Kentucky Secretary of State [website](#))
5. Report and Discussion: Preliminary Survey Results: Lawyer, LLLT, LPO, Public.
6. Report and Discussion: Internal Rating the Current Components of the Oath of Attorney Survey
7. Discussion of Next Steps: Moving from "Review" to "Drafting"
8. Open Forum
9. Announcements
10. Adjourn

**OATH REVIEW AND DRAFTING TASK FORCE**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**January 12, 2026**

The meeting was held in person and remotely via Zoom.

Members present were Rajeev Majumdar (Chair), Kyle Sciuchetti, Hon. Rebecca Glasgow, Roger Wynne, Hon. James Smith, Angela Balconi, and Courtney Hudak. Also present were Matthew Dresden (WSBA Board of Governors liaison), David Ward (Principal Legal Analyst, AOC), Doug Ende (WSBA Chief Disciplinary Counsel), Sara Niegowski (WSBA Chief Communications and Outreach Officer), and Rachel Agent (WSBA Disciplinary Program and Systems Manager).

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**1. Agenda Overview and Reading and Approval of Minutes of December 15, 2025 Meeting**

The Chair presented the meeting agenda. The minutes of the December 15, 2025 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

**2. Report on Meeting Materials**

Chief Disciplinary Counsel Ende reviewed the meeting-material highlights. Of note, Chief Ende explained that there is no single official source for the content of the oath used by state legislators; it appears to combine mandatory language found in RCW 29.04.230 (Oath of Applicant) and Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

**3. Report on Draft Surveys and Bar News**

Chief Communications Officer Niegowski received feedback about the three draft surveys (Lawyer, Limited License Legal Technician, and Limited Practice Officer), which she planned to circulate shortly after the meeting. Additionally, the upcoming Washington State Bar News will feature an article by the Chair describing the work of the Task Force.

**4. Preparation for Next Meeting**

An internal survey will be distributed to the Task Force participants to identify the most critical components of the current oath along with optional input on the specific language.

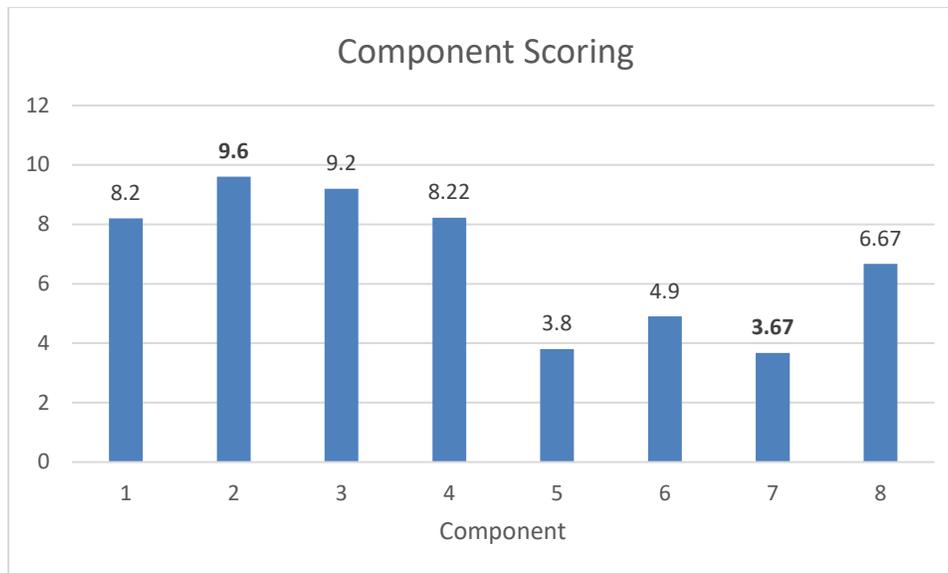
**5. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

## INTERNAL SURVEY: RATING THE CURRENT COMPONENTS OF THE OATH OF ATTORNEY

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1. I am fully subject to the laws of the State of Washington and the laws of the United States and will abide by the same.
2. I will support the constitution of the State of Washington and the constitution of the United States.
3. I will abide by the Rules of Professional Conduct approved by the Supreme Court of the State of Washington.
4. I will maintain the respect due to the courts of justice and judicial officers.
5. I will not counsel, or maintain any suit, or proceeding, which shall appear to me to be unjust, or any defense except as I believe to be honestly debatable under the law, unless it is in defense of a person charged with a public offense. I will employ for the purpose of maintaining the causes confided to me only those means consistent with truth and honor. I will never seek to mislead the judge or jury by any artifice or false statement.
6. I will maintain the confidence and preserve inviolate the secrets of my client, and will accept no compensation in connection with the business of my client unless this compensation is from or with the knowledge and approval of the client or with the approval of the court.
7. I will abstain from all offensive personalities, and advance no fact prejudicial to the honor or reputation of a party or witness unless required by the justice of the cause with which I am charged.
8. I will never reject, from any consideration personal to myself, the cause of the defenseless or oppressed, or delay unjustly the cause of any person.

**1. I am fully subject to the laws of the State of Washington and the laws of the United States and will abide by the same.**



**Responses**

- This is important, but less important (to me) than the phrase below, i.e. to support the constitution of the State of Washington and of the U.S.
- Laws are important but less so than constitutions. IF they swear to uphold the constitution, do we somehow think they also have to swear to obey the law? What about unconstitutional laws? WE could use the "I am fully subject..." language in the constitutional clause if needed.
- I chose this rating to indicate that the substance of this component is crucial, however the phrasing has room to be more effective.
- I feel this is one of the most impactful components.
- Perhaps some tweaks so that it is expressed in natural language are in order.
- This is a legal conclusion, and an obvious one at that. And do we really mean we will never violate a law, even a speed limit?

**2. I will support the constitution of the State of Washington and the constitution of the United States.**



**Responses**

- This is, arguably, the key component of the oath. I think it should largely be built around this phrase, or, at least, this idea.
- Necessary.
- Perhaps "support and defend"?

**3. I will abide by the Rules of Professional Conduct approved by the Supreme Court of the State of Washington.**



**Responses**

This is very important. In my mind, second, perhaps, only to swearing to uphold the WA and US Constitutions.
Essential, given we are a regulatory bar.
Perhaps substituted "adopted" for "approved."
I understand we might need to say this, but we can end with "Professional Conduct." It's obvious we're talking about rules adopted by the WA Supreme Court.

**4. I will maintain the respect due to the courts of justice and judicial officers.**



**Responses**

All of the rest of the comments, I believe, can and should be consolidated into a single, sweeping, brief statement, perhaps like the following: "I will comport myself with the honor and decorum of a Washington attorney in my interactions with the Court, opposing parties, opposing counsel, and the public." Regarding the particular phrase above, I think the pledge to uphold "decorum" in the proposed sample covers it.

Need this. Essential.

We might to expand this concept: ""strive to treat all persons with dignity and respect"?

5. I will not counsel, or maintain any suit, or proceeding, which shall appear to me to be unjust, or any defense except as I believe to be honestly debatable under the law, unless it is in defense of a person charged with a public offense. I will employ for the purpose of maintaining the causes confided to me only those means consistent with truth and honor. I will never seek to mislead the judge or jury by any artifice or false statement.



**Responses**

See above, particularly the pledge to uphold "honor" in the proposed statement. I think honor covers much (and perhaps all) of the substance above.
This is way too specific for the oath, with the weird public defense caveat is just awkward. Not misleading judges is essential, but can probably be encompassed with the phrase about due respect ("and candor") to the courts and judges.
important component with a lot of room for improvement of phrasing
Propose rewording slightly to improve flow. "Artifice" is rather archaic and should be removed.
Covered by obligation to adhere to RPC. "Unjust" clause involves too many exceptions and provisos.
I think this piece of the oath is somewhat redundant, as Rule 11 should (at least theoretically) inform lawyers that all submissions to courts need to be "honestly debatable under the law."
Needless duplication of the RPCs.

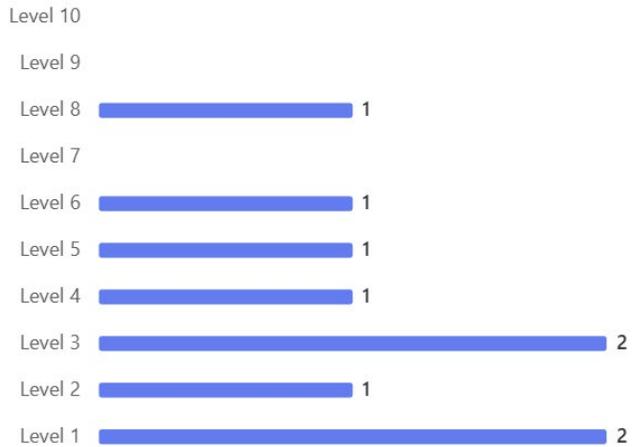
**6. I will maintain the confidence and preserve inviolate the secrets of my client, and will accept no compensation in connection with the business of my client unless this compensation is from or with the knowledge and approval of the client or with the approval of the court.**



**Responses**

See above.
Too complicated- in the RPCs with way more clarity.
important component with a lot of room for improvement of phrasing
Confidentiality seems to be more important than the payment portion of this clause. Propose rewording to make it more succinct and focus on client confidentiality.
Covered by the RPC.
Seems to be already covered under the RPCs, as this is basically a requirement in the oath to not violate RPC 1.6 (and others w/ the compensation piece).
Needless duplication of the RPCs.

**7. I will abstain from all offensive personalities, and advance no fact prejudicial to the honor or reputation of a party or witness unless required by the justice of the cause with which I am charged.**



**Responses**

See above.
The keeping things not personal is awesome; the language error and archaic description not so much.
The concepts are important but this clause should be reworded to stress professionalism and civility in plainer terms.
To the extent this clause can be converted to a civility/professionalism/dignity/courtesy/integrity clause, it has value.
Antiquated language, very wordy way of requiring lawyers act with politeness/integrity in court
I don't really know what this means. To the extent it duplicates or contradicts the RPCs, let them control.

**8. I will never reject, from any consideration personal to myself, the cause of the defenseless or oppressed, or delay unjustly the cause of any person.**



**Responses**

See above.
Important, but this language has no meaning and is a comma splicing nightmare.
important component with a lot of room for improvement of phrasing
An explicit reference to RPC 6.2 may be helpful as well.
Antiquated language, but this portion of the oath is still appropriate today. Hard to enforce this portion of the oath (how does one determine if one cause is "of the defenseless or oppressed" versus another?)
I like the concept, but am not fond of the language. How about we commit "(1) to advance the cause of equal justice under the law" or something like that?