



The State Bar *of California*

Moral Character Working Group

History and Purpose

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Governance in the Public Interest Task Force

- 2017: Report presented to the State Bar Board of Trustees (BOT) recommending certain changes to the function and structure of State Bar committees and commissions, including the Committee of Bar Examiners (CBE).
- Appendix I:
 - Recommends that the BOT study its relationship with the CBE to improve engagement and governance.
 - Consultants hired to study the CBE and its activities, including its moral character process.



- June 2018: Consultants draft report:
 - Recommends that the State Bar develop more specific, clearly articulated standards/guidelines for determinations.
 - Observed that the State Bar does not have published standards and guidelines.
 - “The absence of standards and clear definitions regarding moral character is a problem shared by most other jurisdictions.” Notes a lack of transparency.
 - Recommends review of moral character policies/guidelines.



- Sept. 2018: Final report to BOT regarding all State Bar entities.
 - “The absence of standards and clear definitions regarding moral character is a problem shared by most other jurisdictions.” Notes a lack of transparency.
 - Recommends review of moral character policies/guidelines.
 - BOT approves recommendations.
 - Staff forms working group to study the moral character standards and guidelines.



- Purpose of the Working Group:
 - The Moral Character Working Group is tasked with evaluating the standards applied to moral character determinations. The purpose of this review and evaluation is to analyze our existing methodology, and develop clear and appropriate guidelines for determining whether an applicant possesses the requisite moral character. The end product of this review will be to ensure greater uniformity and consistency in decision-making, provide transparency into the moral character evaluation process, and ensure the State Bar provides appropriate consideration for rehabilitative efforts undertaken by applicants.