



# The State Bar *of California*

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## **OPEN SESSION**

### **AGENDA ITEM**

**54-119 JULY 2020**

### **BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE III.I.**

**DATE:** July 16, 2020

**TO:** Members, Board Executive Committee  
Members, Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Mark Broughton, Appointments Liaison, Board Executive Committee  
Juan De La Cruz, Appointments Liaison, Board Executive Committee

**SUBJECT:** California Board of Legal Specialization - Annual Appointment of Officers and Members

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The California Board of Legal Specialization (CBLS) includes seven members, with up to two public members, all of whom are appointed by the State Bar Board of Trustees.

For the upcoming year, the CBLS will have two vacancies, including two officer positions. The State Bar received seven applications for appointment to the vacant positions, and one letter of interest for the chair position, and one letter of interest for the vice-chair position. This agenda item recommends the appointment of one of the applicants to fill a vacant position; reappointment of one existing member to an officer position; and naming one existing member to the other officer position.

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## **BACKGROUND**

The CBLS recommends program rules and provides guidance on policies and protocols for certification of specialists; develops testing and legal education criteria for specialists; and advises the Board of Trustees on the establishment of specialty fields. The CBLS consists of the following seven members, made up of attorneys from a wide range of practice areas, and also includes non-attorney public members:

Aurelio Torre, Santa Ana: 2016–2020  
2019–2020 Chair, Attorney Member, Appellate Law Certified Specialist

Robert Hershenson, Valencia: 2017–2021  
2019–2020 Vice-Chair, Public Member

Norma L. Acosta, San Jose: 2019–2023  
Attorney Member, Workers' Compensation Law Certified Specialist

Jeffrey T. Hammerschmidt, Fresno: 2019–2023  
Attorney Member, Criminal Law Certified Specialist

Mark A. Lester, Camarillo: 2016–2020  
Attorney Member, Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law Certified Specialist

Avi Levy, West Hollywood: 2019–2023  
Attorney Member, Family Law Certified Specialist

Natalie P. Vance, Sacramento: 2019–2023  
Attorney Member, Legal Malpractice Law Certified Specialist

There are two vacancies for the upcoming 2020–2021 State Bar year. The CBLS has historically prioritized the following criteria when considering appointments: (1) prior experience drafting and grading specialist examinations; (2) having a range of specialties represented, including representation for each of the three largest specialty areas (Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law; Family Law; and Workers' Compensation Law) and; (3) allowing for diverse geographic representation to the extent possible.

A chronological list of the State Bar's appointments of members to the CBLS for the last five years is attached as Attachment A.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Officer Vacancies**

Public member Robert Hershenson and attorney member Mark A. Lester have submitted letters of interest for appointment to the officer positions.

It is recommended that Robert Hershenson be appointed to the chair position, and Mark A. Lester be reappointed to the vice-chair position, each for a one-year term. Mr. Hershenson is currently the Vice-Chair on the CBLS, and has consistently contributed to discussion on critical CBLS policy. Mr. Lester is the most tenured CBLS member, and has previously served as member and Chair to the Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law Advisory Commission. His ongoing service indicates his commitment to public protection and the legal specialization program. This has been a period of change for the CBLS and both Mr. Hershenson and Mr. Lester have proven to be effective, forward-thinking leaders.

## **Member Vacancies**

At the conclusion of the March 13 submission deadline, the State Bar received the following applications, for appointment to the CBLS:

- Jeffrey A. Aaron, Ukiah
- Todd S. Berman, Lake Forest
- Kaye Flores (Public Member), Los Angeles
- Randy H. Pollak, Thousand Oaks
- Steven M. Ratner, San Diego
- Julie R. Woods, Martinez
- Jake Yoon (Public Member), Inglewood

It is recommended that Jake Yoon be appointed as member of the CBLS for a four-year term. Mr. Yoon is employed as a corporate executive for a full service airport management company in Inglewood, CA. He has prior volunteer experience with the legal specialization program having served on the Workers' Compensation Law Advisory Commission to the CBLS. His inclusion allows for geographic and ethnic diversity, contributing to better representation of the state.

## **FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT**

None

## **AMENDMENTS TO RULES OF THE STATE BAR**

None

## **AMENDMENTS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY MANUAL**

None

## **STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

Goal: None - core business operations

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Should the Board Executive Committee concur in the proposed action, passage of the following resolution is recommended:**

**RESOLVED**, that the Board Executive Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees appoint Robert Hershenson and reappoint Mark A. Lester as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, to the California Board of Legal Specialization, each for a one-year term effective at the start of the 2020–2021 State Bar year; and it is

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board Executive Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees appoint Jake Yoon to the California Board of Legal Specialization as member for a four-year term effective at the start of the 2020–2021 State Bar year.

**Should the Board of Trustees concur in the proposed action, passage of the following resolution is recommended:**

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the Board Executive Committee, appoint Robert Hershenson and reappoint Mark A. Lester as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, to the California Board of Legal Specialization, each for a one-year term effective at the start of the 2020–2021 State Bar year; and it is

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the Board Executive Committee, appoint Jake Yoon to the California Board of Legal Specialization as member for a four-year term effective at the start of the 2020–2021 State Bar year.

### **ATTACHMENT(S) LIST**

- A.** List of State Bar appointments of members to the CBLS in the last five years (by appointment year)

**LIST OF STATE BAR APPOINTMENTS OF MEMBERS  
TO THE CBLS IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS**

*(By Appointment Year)*

#	State Bar Appointed Member	City	State Bar District	Appointment Year
1	Norma L. Acosta*	San Jose	6	2019
2	Jeffrey T. Hammerschmidt*	Fresno	5	2019
3	Avi Levy*	Los Angeles	2	2019
4	Natalie P. Vance*	Sacramento	3	2019
5	Robert Hershenson* <sup>◊</sup>	Valencia	2	2017
6	Cynthia Levin <sup>◊</sup>	Sunnyvale	6	2017
7	Mark A. Lester*	Oxnard	2	2016
8	Neil Thakur <sup>◊</sup>	San Jose	6	2016
9	Aurelio Torre*	Santa Ana	4	2016
10	Janet M. Coulter	Long Beach	2	2015
11	Louis J. Esbin	Valencia	2	2015
12	Donald K. Sheppard	San Diego	4	2015

*\*current member*

*<sup>◊</sup>public member*