



# The State Bar *of California*

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## **OPEN SESSION**

## **AGENDA ITEM**

**112 MAY 2021**

## **BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE III.B**

**DATE:** May 13, 2021

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

**FROM:** Dag MacLeod, Chief of Mission Advancement & Accountability Division

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Additions to 2021 Legislative Priorities

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This agenda item requests that the Executive Committee and Board approve three additions to the 2021 legislative priorities: letters of support for Assembly Bill 1487, Assembly Joint Resolution 12, and Senate Bill 770.

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### **BACKGROUND**

At their January meetings, the Board Executive Committee and Board of Trustees approved 2021 legislative priorities. At their March meetings, the Board Executive Committee and Board of Trustees approved an additional new priority: providing a letter of support on behalf of the Board for a proposal by the Assembly Judiciary Committee to increase funding for the Equal Access Fund. Since that time, State Bar staff have identified three more bills that merit a letter of support from the State Bar.

### **DISCUSSION**

Assembly Bill (AB) 1487 would establish the Homelessness Prevention Fund to be administered by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission (LSTFC). Subject to appropriation to the State Bar by the Legislature, the bill would require the LSTFC to, among other things, distribute moneys in the fund in the form of grants, awarded on a competitive basis, to fund prescribed legal services, education, and outreach for tenants relating to eviction or displacement.

Assembly Joint Resolution (AJR) 12 would urge the United States Congress to revise the US Code to expand the eligibility requirements for GI Bill benefits to include unaccredited California law schools. Currently, to be eligible for these benefits, a law school must be accredited by a specialized accreditor so that graduates are eligible to sit for a bar examination in any state. Because unaccredited California law schools and some accredited California law schools do not fit that definition, veterans are not currently able to use GI Bill benefits to attend one of these schools.

Senate Bill (SB) 770 would appropriate \$10 million from the General Fund to the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges and require the funds to be used to expand California LAW Pathways: a statewide initiative housed at the Foundation for California Community Colleges that creates a model pipeline between high schools and law schools to help close the diversity gap in the state's attorney workforce population.

These two bills and the joint resolution directly support goals articulated in the State Bar's Strategic Plan. AB 1487 would contribute to expanding Californians' access to justice as articulated in goal 4a: "Support increased funding and enhanced outcome measures for legal services." AJR 12 and SB 770 both fit squarely within the parameters of goal 4's overarching objective: to "promote an inclusive environment in the legal system and for the public it serves, and strive to achieve a statewide attorney population that reflects the rich demographics of the state's population."

## **FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT**

While an increase in the funding available for legal services as proposed in AB 1487 may create an additional administrative burden on the State Bar, in its current form, the bill allows for up to five percent of the funds to be directed toward State Bar administrative costs. Neither AJR 12 nor SB 770 appears to have any potential fiscal impact.

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

None

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

None

## **STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

Goal: 4. Support access to legal services for low- and moderate-income Californians and promote policies and programs to eliminate bias and promote an inclusive environment in the

legal system and for the public it serves, and strive to achieve a statewide attorney population that reflects the rich demographics of the state's population.

Objective: a. Support increased funding and enhanced outcome measures for Legal Services.

Objective: h. Identify means of supporting existing law school programs to improve retention by December 31, 2020.

## **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 approve the submission of letters of support on behalf of the State Bar for AB 1487, AJR 12, and SB 770.

**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 approve the submission of letters of support on behalf of the State Bar for AB 1487, AJR 12, and SB 770.

## **ATTACHMENT(S) LIST**

None