



WSBA

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF GOVERNORS

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LAWYERS WITH DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, individuals with disabilities generally have not been a part of the discussion about diversity in the legal profession; and

WHEREAS, access to the profession is important for people with disabilities for the same reasons it is important to racial and ethnic minorities, sexual minorities and women; and

WHEREAS, statistics indicate that lawyers with disabilities are employed at a lower percentage than are non-disabled lawyers from ethnic and/or racial backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, there is little reliable data on the representation of individuals with disabilities in the legal profession, anecdotal evidence suggests that lawyers with disabilities face many of the same barriers to employment that people with disabilities face in other jobs; and

WHEREAS, attorneys with disabilities continue to face innumerable barriers including but not limited to physical barriers, vision-related communications barriers, hearing-related communications barriers, and attitudinal barriers; and

WHEREAS, attorneys with disabilities, both as applicants and employees, may need a range of accommodations in order to apply for and perform many types of legal jobs and/or to perform the tasks that are required in the pursuit of their work, including but not limited to access to bar examinations, courtrooms and other public venues; and

WHEREAS, some managers of public venues and employers assume that reasonable accommodations will be too costly or difficult to provide; and

WHEREAS, reasonable accommodation obligations extend to ensuring equal access to the "benefits and privileges of employment," which include, but are not limited to, employer-sponsored training, services and social and professional functions; and

WHEREAS, the concept of intersectionality has been defined as the oppression that arises out of the combination of various forms of discrimination, which together produce something unique and distinct from any one form of discrimination standing alone; and

WHEREAS, individuals with disabilities experience intersectional oppression; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED:

That the Washington State Bar Association is committed to maintaining both short-range and long-range diversity goals and plans that specifically include lawyers with disabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Washington State Bar Association expresses its position that attorneys with disabilities be treated with the same regard, courtesies and protection afforded to other protected classes pursuant to Washington's Law Against Discrimination, which prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, families with children, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, and age.

Adopted by the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors on April 13, 2007.

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