

# Referendum: Frequently Asked Questions



## How can members put a referendum before the membership?

Any active member may file a petition for a referendum if it meets the criteria laid out in the WSBA Bylaws (Article VIII), which includes collecting signatures from at least five percent of the active membership before submitting the petition to the WSBA executive director. A referendum may do one of four things: reverse a final action taken by the Board of Governors, modify a final action taken by the Board of Governors, enact a resolution, or amend the WSBA bylaws.

## Are all members eligible to vote?

All members who are active at the time the ballot is sent out, which is slated for March 7, will be eligible to vote.

## How many votes does it take to pass/defeat a referendum?

To pass/defeat a referendum it requires a majority of those active members voting.

## What impact would a \$125 reduction in our fees have on the WSBA?

It would result in a 26 percent budget cut, or \$3.6 million.

## How much of the current WSBA budget is spent on mandatory and non-mandatory functions?

71 percent of the WSBA budget is spent on mandatory functions, 26 percent on member and public service programs, and 3 percent on maintaining an advisable reserve.

## What value do I receive from paying my license fee?

Paying your fees is equivalent to obtaining your business license. It is required in order to practice law in Washington. In addition to the required regulatory functions the WSBA performs on behalf of you and the profession, the WSBA also offers a multitude of progressive programs, services and networks to meet your professional needs throughout your career. The WSBA also provides services to the public that support fairness, access, and justice.

## How do WSBA's license fees compare to those of other states?

The WSBA is one of 32 mandatory or "unified" state bars in the country, which means it is both a regulatory agency and your trade association. The other 18 states pay a license fee to the Supreme Court and additional fees for a bar membership. Washington's license fees are on par when compared to other states that perform regulatory functions and are of comparable membership size, like Michigan, Wisconsin, and Georgia. By comparison with mandatory bars in our region, Oregon's license fee is \$492 annually and Alaska's is \$660.