

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF GOVERNORS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Meeting

August 13, 2026

Call to Order

An emergency meeting of the Board of Governors of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) was called to order by President Francis Adewale at 5:01 p.m. on Thursday, August 13, 2026. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom. Governors in attendance were:

Emily Arneson
Mary Rathbone
Parvin Price
Todd Bloom
Tom Ahearne
Nam Nguyen
Kristina Larry
Jordan Couch
Allison Widney
Matthew Dresden
Kari Petrasek
Christopher Bhang

Officers and Executive Staff in attendance were President Francis Adewale, Immediate Past President Sunitha Anjilvel, Chief Communications and Outreach Officer Sara Niegowski, IT Director Bijal Karia, Chief Disciplinary Counsel & Parliamentarian Doug Ende, Deputy Executive Director Dua Abudiab and Executive Director Terra Nevitt.

Also in attendance were Adam Johnson, Alena Wolotira, Alex L, Alex Reaganson, Andrea S. Jarmon, Andrew Sterneke, Anita Ramasastry, Anthony Hogan, Aqdar Awadh, Ashley Enos, Ashley Lipford, Bobby Henry, Bruna, Carrie Sanford, Celeste Reyes, Dan Clark, Dana Raigrodski, David Gary, Dory Goldberg, Ella Van Trova, Emmy Robertson, Esha Jain, Evan Pham, Fabianny Dierksen, Giezi Bahena, Ireida, Jessica Levin, Jocema Bittencourt, Jora S., Jorge Henrique Melo, Judge Brian Tollefson, Julien Tarraf, Kate Sargeant, Kellen Hade, Kelly Ruhlig, Ki'Ev Cochran, Laya Madhavan, Linda Jellum, Lisa Amatangel, Luis Daniel Szymanski Gomez, Mahima Suresh, Mariola Lisewska, Marisol Garcia, Marwa Almasri, Melissa Lee, Michael S., Morphy Andraws, Nancy Hawkins, Nathalia Falco, Nikhita Singam, Nikole Blue, Nohely Diaz, Norma Linda Ureña, Oscar Mejia, Paris Eriksen, Pearl

McCrea, Peony Fang-Chen Yu, Ramana Pendyala, Rebecca Gil, Rex Nolte, Sarah Collins-Boggins, Dean Anthony Varona, Shelby Carpenter, Spencer Enos, Sukhdeep Chot, Dean Tamara F Lawson, Terry J. Price, Yahya Shakir, and Zubair Siddiqi.

Temporary Policy for Courtesy Seating for the February and July 2027 Bar Exams

The Board considered a temporary policy establishing courtesy seating for the February and July 2027 bar exams for applicants who accept the waiver of the bar exam requirement following the cancellation of the July 2026 examination. Executive Director Nevitt provided an overview of the proposed policy. Associate Director of the Regulatory Services Department Robert Henry provided additional detail regarding the policy's scope and implementation. Gov. Couch moved to approve the temporary courtesy seating policy. The motion passed unanimously. Gov. Fay and Gov. Villeneuve were not present for the vote.

Recommendations to the Court Regarding Additional Remedies for the July 2026 Bar Exam

The Board considered whether to submit recommendations to the Washington Supreme Court regarding additional remedies for applicants affected by the cancellation of the July 2026 bar exam. Gov. Couch introduced the matter by referencing public comment received since the August 7, 2026 special meeting. Gov. Couch noted that applicants who sat for the July 2026 examination experienced significant stressors during the examination itself, drawing a parallel to the circumstances underlying the Court's grant of diploma privilege in 2020. Gov. Couch further observed that the July 2026 examination was not the same test as previously administered examinations, and that applicants who had not passed prior administrations might well have passed the July 2026 exam under normal circumstances. On that basis, Gov. Couch urged the Board to recommend that the Court extend the waiver option to all July 2026 bar exam takers, not solely to first-time takers who were unable to complete the examination.

Discussion followed, with additional Board members expressing support for the recommendation. Governors also raised concerns regarding the privacy of applicants with testing accommodations, noting both the risk that the current eligibility framework could inadvertently disclose accommodation status and the burden placed on affected applicants who had advocated publicly on their own behalf.

Gov. Couch moved to approve the letter drafted by Executive Director Nevitt to the Washington Supreme Court urging extension of the waiver option to all July 2026 bar exam takers. Discussion followed about whether to make additional changes to the letter. The motion passed with one abstention. Gov. Bloom abstained. Gov. Fay and Gov. Villeneuve were not present for the vote.

Member and Public Comments

President Adewale opened the floor for member and public comments. Speakers continued to address concerns regarding the scope of relief available to July 2026 bar exam applicants, with particular focus on equity for retakers and applicants with testing accommodations. The Board acknowledged the comments received.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Adewale adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m. on August 13, 2026.

Respectfully,

Terra Nevitt

Terra Nevitt

WSBA Executive Director & Secretary



Board of Governors Meeting – Motions List
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- **Approve Temporary Courtesy Seating Policy for February and July 2027 Bar Exams for Applicants Accepting Waiver of Bar Exam Requirement:** Passed unanimously. Gov. Fay and Gov. Villeneuve not present for the vote.
- **Approve Letter to Washington Supreme Court Urging Extension of Waiver Option to All July 2026 Bar Exam Takers:** Passed with one abstention (Gov. Bloom). Gov. Fay and Gov. Villeneuve not present for the vote.