



The State Bar *of California*

# The State Bar Act

**(Business and Professions Code  
Sections 6000 et seq.)**

2026



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*[Publisher's Note: This publication is updated annually. Unless otherwise indicated, statutory provisions are effective on January 1 following enactment. To assist readers with legislative research, following each provision is a brief note which includes the chapter number and year of relevant legislation. For selected provisions, an operative date is provided; however, this publication is not intended to be a substitute for legal advice or comprehensive legal research of original sources.]*

## CHAPTER 4. ATTORNEYS

### ARTICLE 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### § 6000 Short Title

This chapter of the Business and Professions Code constitutes the chapter on attorneys. It may be cited as the State Bar Act. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 1. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34.)

#### § 6001 State Bar; Perpetual Succession; Seal; Revenue; Powers; Laws Applicable

(a) The State Bar of California is a public corporation. It is hereinafter designated as the State Bar.

(b) The State Bar has perpetual succession and a seal and it may sue and be sued. It may, for the purpose of carrying into effect and promoting its objectives:

- (1) Make contracts.
- (2) Borrow money, contract debts, issue bonds, notes, and debentures, and secure the payment or performance of its obligations.
- (3) Own, hold, use, manage, and deal in and with real and personal property.
- (4) Construct, alter, maintain, and repair buildings and other improvements to real property.
- (5) Purchase, lease, obtain options upon, acquire by gift, bequest, devise, or otherwise, any real or personal property or any interest therein.

(6) Sell, lease, exchange, convey, transfer, assign, encumber, pledge, or dispose of any of its real or personal property or any interest therein, including without limitation all or any portion of its income or revenues from license fees paid or payable by licensees.

(7) Do all other acts incidental to the foregoing or necessary or expedient for the administration of its affairs and the attainment of its purposes.

(c) Pursuant to those powers enumerated in subdivision (b), it is recognized that the State Bar has authority to raise revenue in addition to that provided for in Section 6140 and other statutory provisions. The State Bar is empowered to raise that additional revenue by any lawful means. However, as of March 31, 2018, the State Bar shall not create any foundations or nonprofit corporations.

(d) The State Bar shall conspicuously publicize to its licensees in the annual fees statement and other appropriate communications, including its internet website and electronic communications, that its licensees have the right to limit the sale or disclosure of licensee information not reasonably related to regulatory purposes. In those communications the State Bar shall note the location of the State Bar's privacy policy, and shall also note the simple procedure by which a licensee may exercise the licensee's right to prohibit or restrict, at the licensee's option, the sale or disclosure of licensee information not reasonably related to regulatory purposes. On or before May 1, 2005, the State Bar shall report to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary regarding the procedures that it has in place to ensure that licensees can appropriately limit the use of their licensee information not reasonably related to regulatory purposes, and the number of licensees choosing to utilize these procedures.

(e) (1) No law of this state restricting, or prescribing a mode of procedure for the exercise of powers of state public bodies or state agencies, or classes thereof, including, but not by way of limitation, the provisions contained in Division 3 (commencing with Section 11000), Division 4 (commencing with Section 16100), and Part 1 (commencing with Section 18000) and Part 2 (commencing with Section 18500) of Division 5, of Title 2 of the Government Code, shall be applicable to the State Bar, unless the Legislature expressly so declares.

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(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1) or any other law, pursuant to Sections 6026.7 and 6026.11, the State Bar is subject to the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000 of Title 1 of the Government Code) and, commencing April 1, 2016, the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1) or any other law, members of the board of trustees of the State Bar and employees of the State Bar shall be subject to the conflicts of interest provisions relating to contracts in Sections 1090 to 1097.2, inclusive, set forth in Article 4 of Chapter 1 of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code, and members of the board of trustees of the State Bar shall be deemed state officers and employees of the State Bar shall be deemed state employees thereunder. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 2. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1957, ch. 1526; Stats. 1978, ch. 380; Stats. 1988, ch. 1149; Stats. 2004, ch. 356; Stats. 2015, ch. 537; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **§ 6001.1 State Bar—Protection of the Public as the Highest Priority**

Protection of the public, which includes support for greater access to, and inclusion in, the legal system, shall be the highest priority for the State Bar of California and the board of trustees in exercising their licensing, regulatory, and disciplinary functions. Whenever the protection of the public is inconsistent with other interests sought to be promoted, the protection of the public shall be paramount. (Added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6001.2** (Added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Repealed by Stats. 2022, ch. 419.)

### **§ 6001.3 Legislative Intent, Findings, and Declarations; Development, Report, and Implementation of Goals**

(a) It is the intent of the Legislature that the State Bar maintain its commitment to and support of effective policies and activities to enhance access, fairness, and diversity in the legal profession and the elimination of bias in the practice of law.

(b) The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(1) The rich diversity of the people of California requires a justice system that is equally accessible and free of bias and is a core value of the legal profession.

(2) Diversity and inclusion are an integral part of the State Bar's public protection mission to build, retain, and maintain a diverse legal profession to provide quality and culturally sensitive services to an ever-increasing diverse population.

(3) Diversity increases public trust and confidence and the appearance of fairness in the justice system and therefore increases access to justice.

(4) The State Bar should continue to increase diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

(c) The State Bar shall develop and implement a plan to meet the goals set forth in this section, which may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of needed revenue. The State Bar shall prepare and submit a report to the Legislature, by March 30, 2019, and every two years thereafter, on the plan and its implementation, including a description of activities undertaken to support the plan, their outcomes, and their effectiveness. (Added by Stats. 2018, ch. 659. Amended by Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **§ 6001.4 State Bar Employee Compensation and Benefits**

Commencing on or before February 1, 2011, the State Bar shall make available, upon request of a member of the public, the classification and total annual compensation paid to each of its employees by name, as well as any and all rules, policies, and agreements pertaining to the compensation and benefits of any employees of the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 2010, ch. 476.)

### **§ 6001.5 Fingerprints Requirement**

(a) The State Bar of California shall require that all employees and prospective employees, and may require volunteers, contractors, and subcontractors, to submit fingerprints to the Department of Justice and to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in order to establish identity and to determine whether the individual has a record of criminal conviction in this state or in other

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states, including through a national criminal history check.

(b) The State Bar shall submit to the Department of Justice fingerprint images and related information required by the Department of Justice for all employees, prospective employees, volunteers, contractors, and subcontractors, pursuant to subdivision (u) of Section 11105 of the Penal Code. The Department of Justice shall provide a state or federal level response pursuant to subdivision (p) of Section 11105 of the Penal Code. (Added by Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **§ 6002 Licensees**

(a) The licensees of the State Bar are all persons admitted and licensed to practice law in this State except justices and judges of courts of record during their continuance in office.

(b) As used in this chapter or any other provision of law, "member of the State Bar" shall be deemed to refer to a licensee of the State Bar. (Origin: State Bar Act, §§ 3, 7. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### **§ 6002.1 Official Licensing Records**

(a) A licensee of the State Bar shall maintain all of the following on the official licensing records of the State Bar:

- (1) The licensee's current office address and telephone number or, if no office is maintained, the address to be used for State Bar purposes or purposes of the agency charged with attorney discipline.
- (2) All specialties in which the licensee is certified.
- (3) Any other jurisdictions in which the licensee is admitted and the dates of their admission.
- (4) The jurisdiction, and the nature and date of any discipline imposed by another jurisdiction, including the terms and conditions of any probation imposed, and, if suspended or disbarred in another jurisdiction, the date of any reinstatement in that jurisdiction.
- (5) Any other information as may be required by agreement with or by conditions of probation

imposed by the agency charged with attorney discipline.

A licensee shall notify the licensing records office of the State Bar of any change in the information required by paragraphs (1), (4), and (5) within 30 days of any change and of the change in the information required by paragraphs (2) and (3) on or before the date set by the State Bar for payment of license fees pursuant to Section 6140 or 6141.

(b) Every former licensee of the State Bar who has been ordered by the Supreme Court to comply with Rule 9.20 of the California Rules of Court shall maintain on the official licensing records of the State Bar the former licensee's current address and within 10 days after any change therein, shall file a change of address with a licensing records office of the State Bar until such time as the former licensee is no longer subject to the order.

(c) The notice initiating a proceeding conducted under this chapter may be served upon the licensee or former licensee of the State Bar to whom it is directed by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the licensee or former licensee at the latest address shown on the official licensing records of the State Bar. The service is complete at the time of the mailing but any prescribed period of notice and any right or duty to do any act or make any response within any prescribed period or on a date certain after the notice is served by mail shall be extended five days if the place of address is within the State of California, 10 days if the place of address is outside the State of California but within the United States, and 20 days if the place of address is outside the United States. A licensee of the State Bar or former licensee may waive the requirements of this subdivision and may, with the written consent of another licensee of the State Bar, designate that other licensee to receive service of any notice or papers in any proceeding conducted under this chapter.

(d) The State Bar shall not make available to the general public the information specified in paragraph (5) of subdivision (a) unless that information is required to be made available by a condition of probation. That information is, however, available to the State Bar, the Supreme Court, or the agency charged with attorney discipline.

(e) The State Bar may develop a prescribed form for the making of reports required by this section, usage of which it may require by rule or regulation. (Added by Stats. 1985, ch. 453. Amended by Stats. 1986, ch. 475;

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Stats. 2007, ch. 474; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6003        Classes of Licensees**

Licensees of the State Bar are divided into two classes:

- (a) Active licensees.
- (b) Inactive licensees. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 4. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6004        Active Licensees**

Every licensee of the State Bar is an active licensee until as in Section 6007 of this code provided or at the licensee's request, the licensee is enrolled as an inactive licensee. (Origin: State Bar Act, §§ 5, 6. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1957, ch. 737; Stats. 1977, ch. 58; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6005        Inactive Licensees**

Inactive licensees are those licensees who have requested that they be enrolled as inactive licensees or who have been enrolled as inactive licensees as set forth in Section 6007. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 5. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1957, ch. 737; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6006        Retirement from Practice; Privileges of Inactive Licensees**

- (a) Active licensees who retire from practice shall be enrolled as inactive licensees at their request.
- (b) Inactive licensees are not entitled to practice law. Those who are enrolled as inactive licensees at their request may, on application and payment of all fees required, become active licensees. Those who are or have been enrolled as inactive licensees at their request are licensees of the State Bar for purposes of Section 15 of Article VI of the California Constitution. Those who are enrolled as inactive licensees pursuant to Section 6007 may become active licensees as provided in that section.
- (c) Inactive licensees have such other privileges, not inconsistent with this chapter, as the board of trustees provides. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 8. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1957, ch. 737; Stats.

1977, ch. 58; Stats. 1989, ch. 1425; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

### **§ 6007        Involuntary Enrollment as an Inactive Licensee**

- (a) When a licensee requires involuntary treatment pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 5300) of Chapter 2 of Division 5 of, or Part 2 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 6 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or when under an order pursuant to Section 3051, 3106.5 or 3152 of the Welfare and Institutions Code they have been placed in or returned to inpatient status at the California Rehabilitation Center or its branches, or when they have been determined insane or mentally incompetent and is confined for treatment or placed on outpatient status pursuant to the Penal Code, or on account of their mental condition a guardian or conservator, for their estate or person or both, has been appointed, the Board of Trustees or an officer of the State Bar shall enroll the licensee as an inactive licensee.

The clerk of any court making an order containing any of the determinations or adjudications referred to in the immediately preceding paragraph shall send a certified copy of that order to the State Bar at the same time that the order is entered.

The clerk of any court with which is filed a notice of certification for intensive treatment pursuant to Article 4 (commencing with Section 5250) of Chapter 2 of Division 5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, upon receipt of the notice, shall transmit a certified copy of it to the State Bar.

The State Bar may procure a certified copy of any determination, order, adjudication, appointment, or notice when the clerk concerned has failed to transmit one or when the proceeding was had in a court other than a court of this state.

In the case of an enrollment pursuant to this subdivision, the State Bar shall terminate the enrollment when the licensee has had the fact of their restoration to capacity judicially determined, upon the licensee's release from inpatient status at the California Rehabilitation Center or its branches pursuant to Section 3053, 3109, or 3151 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or upon the licensee's unconditional release from the medical facility pursuant to Section 5304 or 5305 of the Welfare and Institutions Code; and on payment of all fees required.

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When a licensee is placed in, returned to, or released from inpatient status at the California Rehabilitation Center or its branches, or discharged from the narcotics treatment program, the Director of Corrections or their designee shall transmit to the State Bar a certified notice attesting to that fact.

(b) The State Bar Court shall also enroll a licensee of the State Bar as an inactive licensee in each of the following cases:

(1) A licensee asserts a claim of insanity or mental incompetence in any pending action or proceeding, alleging their inability to understand the nature of the action or proceeding or inability to assist counsel in representation of the licensee.

(2) The court makes an order assuming jurisdiction over the licensee's law practice, pursuant to Section 6180.5 or 6190.34.

(3) After notice and opportunity to be heard before the State Bar Court, the State Bar Court finds that the licensee, because of mental infirmity or illness, or because of the habitual use of intoxicants or drugs, is (i) unable or habitually fails to perform their duties or undertakings competently, or (ii) unable to practice law without substantial threat of harm to the interests of their clients or the public. No proceeding pursuant to this paragraph shall be instituted unless the State Bar Court finds, after preliminary investigation, or during the course of a disciplinary proceeding, that probable cause exists therefor. The determination of probable cause is administrative in character and no notice or hearing is required.

In the case of an enrollment pursuant to this subdivision, the State Bar Court shall terminate the enrollment upon proof that the facts found as to the licensee's disability no longer exist and on payment of all fees required.

(c) (1) The State Bar Court may order the involuntary inactive enrollment of an attorney upon a finding based on all the available evidence, including affidavits, that the attorney has not complied with Section 6002.1 and cannot be located after reasonable investigation.

(2) The State Bar Court may order the involuntary inactive enrollment of an attorney if it finds, based on all the available evidence, including affidavits:

(A) The attorney has caused or is causing substantial harm to the attorney's clients or the public.

(B) There is a reasonable probability that the chief trial counsel will prevail on the merits of the underlying disciplinary matter, and that the attorney will be disbarred.

(3) In the case of an enrollment under paragraph (2), the underlying matter shall proceed on an expedited basis.

(4) The State Bar Court shall order the involuntary inactive enrollment of an attorney upon the filing of a recommendation of disbarment after hearing or default. For purposes of this section, that attorney shall be placed on involuntary inactive enrollment regardless of the license status of the attorney at the time.

(5) The State Bar Court shall order the involuntary inactive enrollment of an attorney who is sentenced to incarceration for 90 days or more as a result of a criminal conviction for at least the period of time in which the attorney is incarcerated.

(6) The State Bar Court shall order attorneys who are placed on inactive enrollment pursuant to this subdivision to comply with Rule 9.20 of the California Rules of Court.

(7) The board shall formulate and adopt rules of procedure to implement this subdivision.

In the case of an enrollment pursuant to this subdivision, the State Bar Court shall terminate the involuntary inactive enrollment upon proof that the attorney's conduct no longer poses a substantial threat of harm to the interests of the attorney's clients or the public or where an attorney who could not be located proves compliance with Section 6002.1.

(d) (1) The State Bar Court may order the involuntary inactive enrollment of an attorney for violation of probation upon the occurrence of all of the following:

(A) The attorney is under a suspension order any portion of which has been stayed during a period of probation.

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(B) The State Bar Court finds that probation has been violated.

(C) The State Bar Court recommends to the Supreme Court that the attorney receive an actual suspension on account of the probation violation or other disciplinary matter.

(2) The State Bar Court shall terminate an enrollment under this subdivision upon expiration of a period equal to the period of stayed suspension in the probation matter, or until the effective date of a Supreme Court order imposing an actual suspension on account of the probation violation or other disciplinary matter, whichever occurs first.

(3) If the Supreme Court orders a period of actual suspension in the probation matter, any period of involuntary inactive enrollment pursuant to this subdivision shall be credited against the period of actual suspension ordered.

(e) (1) The State Bar Court shall order the involuntary, inactive enrollment of a licensee whose default has been entered pursuant to the State Bar Rules of Procedure if both of the following conditions are met:

(A) The notice was duly served pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 6002.1.

(B) The notice contained the following language at or near the beginning of the notice, in capital letters:

IF YOU FAIL TO FILE AN ANSWER TO THIS NOTICE WITHIN THE TIME ALLOWED BY STATE BAR RULES, INCLUDING EXTENSIONS, OR IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR AT THE STATE BAR COURT TRIAL, (1) YOUR DEFAULT SHALL BE ENTERED, (2) YOU SHALL BE ENROLLED AS AN INVOLUNTARY INACTIVE LICENSEE OF THE STATE BAR AND WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PRACTICE LAW UNLESS THE DEFAULT IS SET ASIDE ON MOTION TIMELY MADE UNDER THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE STATE BAR, (3) YOU SHALL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE FURTHER IN THESE PROCEEDINGS UNLESS YOUR DEFAULT IS SET ASIDE, AND (4) YOU SHALL BE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL DISCIPLINE.

(2) The State Bar Court shall terminate the involuntary inactive enrollment of a licensee under this subdivision when the licensee's default is set aside on motion timely made under the State Bar Rules of Procedure or the disciplinary proceedings are completed.

(3) The enrollment under this subdivision is administrative in character and no hearing is required.

(4) Upon the involuntary inactive enrollment of a licensee under this subdivision, the notice required by subdivision (b) of Section 6092.5 shall be promptly given.

(f) The pendency or determination of a proceeding or investigation provided for by this section shall not abate or terminate a disciplinary investigation or proceeding except as required by the facts and law in a particular case.

(g) No license fees shall accrue against the licensee during the period they are enrolled as an inactive licensee pursuant to this section.

(h) The State Bar Court may order a full range of interim remedies or final discipline short of involuntary inactive enrollment, including, but not limited to, conditions of probation following final discipline, or directly ordered interim remedies, to restrict or supervise an attorney's practice of law, as well as proceedings under subdivision (a), (b), (c), or (d), or under Section 6102 or 6190. They may include restrictions as to scope of practice, monetary accounting procedures, review of performance by probation or other monitors appointed by the board, or such other measures as may be determined, after hearing, to protect present and future clients from likely substantial harm. These restrictions may be imposed upon a showing as provided in subdivision (c). (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1374, operative July 1, 1969. Amended by Stats. 1969, ch. 351; Stats. 1972, ch. 489; Stats. 1975, ch. 86, effective May 17, 1975; Stats. 1977, ch. 58; Stats. 1983, ch. 254; Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 1986, ch. 1114; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### § 6008 Property; Exemption from Taxation

All property of the State Bar is hereby declared to be held for essential public and governmental purposes in

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the judicial branch of the government and such property is exempt from all taxes of the State or any city, city and county, district, public corporation, or other political subdivision, public body or public agency. (Added by Stats. 1957, ch. 1526.)

### **§ 6008.1 Bonds, Notes, etc.; Liability; Approval**

No bond, note, debenture, evidence of indebtedness, mortgage, deed of trust, assignment, pledge, contract, lease, agreement, or other contractual obligation of the State Bar shall:

(a) Create a debt or other liability of the state nor of any entity other than the State Bar (or any successor public corporation).

(b) Create any personal liability on the part of the licensees of the State Bar or the members of the board of trustees or any person executing the same, by reason of the issuance or execution thereof.

(c) Be required to be approved or authorized under the provisions of any other law or regulation of this state. (Added by Stats. 1957, ch. 1526. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6008.2 Bonds, Notes, etc.; Exemption from Taxation**

Bonds, notes, debentures and other evidences of indebtedness of the State Bar are hereby declared to be issued for essential public and governmental purposes in the judicial branch of the government and, together with interest thereon and income therefrom, shall be exempt from taxes. (Added by Stats. 1957, ch. 1526.)

### **§ 6008.3 Default Upon Obligations; Rights and Remedies**

The State Bar may vest in any obligee or trustee the right, in the event of default upon any obligation of the State Bar, to take possession of property of the State Bar, cause the appointment of a receiver for such property, acquire title thereto through foreclosure proceedings, and exercise such other rights and remedies as may be mutually agreed upon between the State Bar and the holder or proposed holder of any such obligation. (Added by Stats. 1957, ch. 1526.)

### **§ 6008.4 Exercise of Powers by Board of Trustees**

All powers granted to the State Bar by Sections 6001 and 6008.3 may be exercised and carried out by action of its board of trustees. In any resolution, indenture, contract, agreement, or other instrument providing for, creating, or otherwise relating to, any obligation of the State Bar, the board may make, fix, and provide such terms, conditions, covenants, restrictions, and other provisions as the board deems necessary or desirable to facilitate the creation, issuance, or sale of such obligation or to provide for the payment or security of such obligation and any interest thereon, including, but not limited to, covenants and agreements relating to fixing and maintaining license fees. (Added by Stats. 1957, ch. 1526. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6008.5** (Added by Stats. 1957, ch. 1526. Repealed by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

### **§ 6008.6 Award of Contracts—Limits, Request for Proposal Procedure**

The State Bar shall award no contract for goods, services, or both, for an aggregate amount in excess of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), or for information technology goods, services, or both, for an aggregate amount in excess of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000), except pursuant to the standards established in Article 4 (commencing with Section 10335) of Chapter 2 of Part 2 of Division 2 of the Public Contract Code and approval of the board of trustees. In the event that approval for a particular contract by the board is not feasible because approval of the contract is necessary prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the State Bar may approve the contract after consultation with and approval by a designated committee of the board and subject to notification of the full board at the board's next regularly scheduled meeting. The State Bar shall establish a request for proposal procedure by rule, pursuant to the general standards established in Article 4 (commencing with Section 10335) of Chapter 2 of Part 2 of Division 2 of the Public Contract Code. For the purposes of this section, "information technology" includes, but is not limited to, all electronic technology systems and services, automated information handling, system design and analysis, conversion voice, video, and data communications, network systems, requisite facilities, equipment, system controls, stimulation,

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electronic commerce, and all related interactions between people and machines. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 342. Amended by Stats. 2010, ch. 2; Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

### **§ 6008.7 Purchasing Policies; Align with Other State Agencies**

The State Bar shall, by January 1, 2019, develop purchasing policies that align with the purchasing policies of other state agencies. (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 417.)

### **§ 6009 City or County Registration of Attorneys Who Qualify as Lobbyists; Lobbyist Information That May be Required to be Disclosed**

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a city, county, or city and county may require attorneys who qualify as lobbyists, as defined by the local jurisdiction, to register and disclose their lobbying activities directed toward the local agencies of those jurisdictions, in the same manner and to the same extent such registration and disclosure is required of nonattorney lobbyists. Any prohibitions against specified activities by lobbyists enacted by a city, county, or city and county shall also apply to attorneys who qualify as lobbyists.

(b) For purposes of this section, information about a lobbyist that may be required to be disclosed is:

(1) The name, business address, and telephone number of the lobbyist, of any lobbying firm of which the lobbyist is a partner, owner, officer, or employee; and of any persons or lobbying firms paid to lobby by the lobbyist.

(2) The name, business address, and business telephone number of each client who pays the lobbyist to lobby; the specific matter and agency lobbied, itemized by client; and the amount of money paid to the lobbyist for lobbying and the total expenses of the lobbyist for lobbying, itemized by client.

(3) All gifts or payments made by the lobbyist to officials in the jurisdiction, itemized by the name of the official, the amount, date, and description of the gift or payment, and the names of the person making the gift or payment and the person receiving the gift or payment.

(4) All campaign contributions made, arranged, or delivered by the lobbyist to officials in the jurisdiction, specified by amount, date, and name of the official receiving the contribution. (Added Stats. 1994, ch. 526.)

### **§ 6009.3 Attorney to Inform Client in Writing Concerning Voluntary Contributions**

The Legislature finds and declares that it is important to inform taxpayers that they may make voluntary contributions to certain funds or programs, as provided on the state income tax return. The Legislature further finds and declares that many taxpayers remain unaware of the voluntary contribution check-offs on the state income tax return. Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to encourage all persons who prepare state income tax returns, including attorneys, to inform their clients in writing, prior to the completion of any state income tax return, that they may make a contribution to any voluntary contribution check-off on the state income tax return if they so choose. (Added by Stats. 1997, ch. 337. Amended by Stats. 1998, ch. 485.)

### **§ 6009.5 Collection and Reporting of Demographic Data—Procedures and Limitations**

The State Bar shall adopt procedures to facilitate reporting of mandatory and voluntary information by providing licensees with a centralized mechanism for reporting information online at the State Bar Internet Web site, including, but not limited to, data required to be provided pursuant to the State Bar Act, or by other statutes, rules, and case law, and demographic information. Any demographic data collected shall be used only for general purposes and shall not be identified to any individual licensee or his or her State Bar record. (Added by Stats. 2006, ch. 390. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6009.7** (Added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Repealed by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

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### ARTICLE 2 ADMINISTRATION

#### § 6010 Board of Trustees in General

(a) The State Bar is governed by a board known as the board of trustees of the State Bar. The board has the powers and duties conferred by this chapter.

(b) As used in this chapter or any other provision of law, "board of governors" shall be deemed to refer to the board of trustees. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 20. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

#### § 6011 Appointment of the Executive Director of the State Bar

(a) The board shall appoint an executive director of the State Bar, who shall be responsible for the leadership and management of the State Bar according to the strategic direction set by the board.

(b) The board shall appoint a lawyer admitted to practice in California to serve as the executive director of the State Bar. The executive director shall be appointed for a term of four years and may be reappointed for additional four-year terms. The executive director shall serve at the pleasure of the board. The executive director shall not engage in private practice. The State Bar shall notify the Senate Committee on Rules and the Senate and Assembly Committees on Judiciary within seven days of the dismissal or hiring of an executive director.

(c) The appointment of the executive director is subject to confirmation by the Senate, and the time limits prescribed in Section 1774 of the Government Code for Senate confirmation and for service in office are applicable to the appointment.

(d) This section applies to persons appointed as the executive director on or after January 1, 2024. (Added by Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

#### § 6012 Appointment of the General Counsel of the State Bar

(a) The board shall appoint a general counsel of the State Bar to serve as the chief legal advisor to the board on issues not related to attorney discipline.

(b) The board shall appoint a lawyer admitted to practice in California to serve as general counsel of the

State Bar. The general counsel shall be appointed for a term of four years and may be reappointed for additional four-year terms. The general counsel shall serve at the pleasure of the board. The general counsel shall not engage in private practice. The State Bar shall notify the Senate Committee on Rules and the Senate and Assembly Committees on Judiciary within seven days of the dismissal or hiring of a general counsel.

(c) The appointment of the general counsel is subject to confirmation by the Senate, and the time limits prescribed in Section 1774 of the Government Code for Senate confirmation and for service in office are applicable to the appointment.

(d) This section applies to persons appointed general counsel on or after January 1, 2024. (Added by Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

**§ 6012.5** (Added by Stats. 1989, ch. 1223. Repealed by Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

**§ 6013** (Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Repealed by Stats. 1989, ch. 122.)

#### § 6013.1 State Bar Board of Trustees— Appointment of Attorney Members by the Supreme Court; State Bar Administrative Responsibilities for Appointment Process

(a) The Supreme Court shall appoint five attorney members of the board pursuant to a process that the Supreme Court may prescribe. These attorney members shall serve for a term of four years and may be reappointed by the Supreme Court for one additional term only.

(b) The Supreme Court shall fill any vacancy in the term of, and make any reappointment of, any appointed attorney member.

(c) When making appointments to the board, the Supreme Court should consider appointing attorneys that represent the following categories: legal services; small firm or solo practitioners; historically underrepresented groups, including consideration of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation; and legal academics. In making appointments to the board, the Supreme Court should also consider geographic distribution, years of practice, particularly attorneys who are within the first five years of practice or 36 years of

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age and under, and participation in voluntary local or state bar activities.

(d) The State Bar shall be responsible for carrying out the administrative responsibilities related to the appointment process described in subdivision (a). (Former § 6013.1 added by Stats. 1989, ch. 1223, repealed by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. New § 6013.1 added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

**§ 6013.2** (Added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Repealed by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

### **§ 6013.3 State Bar Board of Trustees— Appointment of Attorney Members by the Senate Committee on Rules and by the Speaker of the Assembly**

(a) One attorney member of the board shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules and one attorney member of the board shall be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

(b) An attorney member appointed pursuant to this section shall serve for a term of four years. Vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the term. An appointed attorney member may be reappointed pursuant to this section. (Added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Amended by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

**§ 6013.4** (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 995. Repealed by Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

### **§ 6013.5 Public Members; Appointment; Qualifications; Term**

(a) Effective January 1, 2018, a maximum of six members of the board shall be members of the public who have never been licensees of the State Bar or admitted to practice before any court in the United States.

(b) Each of these members shall serve for a term of four years. Vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the term.

(c) Effective January 1, 2018, one public member shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules and one

public member shall be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

(d) Four public members shall be appointed by the Governor, subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

(e) Each respective appointing authority shall fill any vacancy in and make any reappointment to each respective office. (Added by Stats. 1975, ch. 874. Amended by Stats. 1979, ch. 1041; Stats. 1984, ch. 16; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6013.5.5 Public Members Appointment or Reappointment to the State Bar Board of Trustees—Applicable Provisions**

Subdivision (c) of Section 450 and Sections 450.2 to 450.6, inclusive, shall apply to public members appointed or reappointed on or after January 1, 2012. (Added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Amended by Stats. 2022, ch. 569.)

### **§ 6013.6 Employment by Public Agencies; Reduced Compensation; Job-Related Benefits**

(a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), any full-time employee of any public agency who serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the State Bar of California shall not suffer any loss of rights, promotions, salary increases, retirement benefits, tenure, or other job-related benefits, which he or she would otherwise have been entitled to receive.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (a), any public agency which employs a person who serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the State Bar of California may reduce the employee's salary, but no other right or job-related benefit, pro rata to the extent that the employee does not work the number of hours required by statute or written regulation to be worked by other employees of the same grade in any particular pay period and the employee does not claim available leave time. The employee shall be afforded the opportunity to perform job duties during other than regular working hours if such a work arrangement is practical and would not be a burden to the public agency.

(c) The Legislature finds that service as a member of the Board of Trustees of the State Bar of California by a person employed by a public agency is in the public interest. (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 473, effective August 8, 1990. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

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**§ 6014** (Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1975, ch. 874. Repealed by Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

### **§ 6015 Qualifications of Members**

No person is eligible for attorney membership on the board unless both of the following conditions are satisfied:

- (a) He or she is an active licensee of the State Bar.
- (b) Either:
  - (1) Prior to October 31, 2020, if elected, he or she maintains his or her principal office for the practice of law within the State Bar district from which he or she is elected.
  - (2) If appointed by the Supreme Court or the Legislature, he or she maintains his or her principal office for the practice of law within the State of California. (Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1975, ch. 874; Stats. 1985, ch. 465; Stats. 1989, ch. 1223; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6016 Tenure of Members; Vacancies; Interim Board**

- (a) The term of office of each attorney member of the board shall be four years. Vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the term.
- (b) The board of trustees may provide by rule for an interim board to act in the place and stead of the board when because of vacancies during terms of office there is less than a quorum of the board.
- (c) The time served during the remainder of a midterm vacancy by any member appointed to fill that vacancy shall not count toward any term limits for the member filling the vacancy. (Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1968, ch. 545; Stats. 1975, ch. 874; Stats. 2002, ch. 415, effective Sept. 9, 2002; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2022, ch. 419.)

### **§ 6016.2 Board Member Removal**

- (a) Each appointing authority may remove from office at any time any member of the board appointed by that authority for continued neglect of duties required by law, or for incompetence or unprofessional or dishonorable conduct.
- (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed as a limitation or restriction on the power of the appointing authority conferred on the appointing authority by any other provision of law to remove any member of the board.
- (c) As used in this section, "appointing authority" means the person or entity with authority to make an appointment to the board as provided in this article. (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

**§ 6017** (Origin: State Bar Act, § 14. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Repealed by Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

**§ 6018** (Added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Repealed by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

### **§ 6019 Appointments**

Each place upon the board for which a member is to be appointed shall for the purposes of the appointment be deemed a separate office. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 15. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1981, ch. 836; Stats. 2002, ch. 415, effective September 9, 2002; Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

### **§ 6020 Officers in General**

The officers of the State Bar are a chair, a vice chair, and a secretary. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 10. Amended by Stats. 1957, ch. 551; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6021 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair by Supreme Court; Assumption of Duties; Time; Terms**

- (a) The selection of the chair and vice chair of the board shall be made by appointment of the Supreme Court.

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(b) The chair and the vice chair shall each be appointed for a term not to exceed two years. The chair and vice chair shall assume the duties of their respective offices at the conclusion of the September meeting following their appointment. The chair and vice chair shall not serve more than two terms, except that a chair or vice chair who is appointed to fill a vacancy for the balance of a term is eligible to serve two full terms in addition to the remainder of the term for which they were appointed. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 11. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1943, ch. 278; Stats. 1957, ch. 551; Stats. 1970, ch. 510; Stats. 1973, ch. 17, effective Apr. 6, 1973; Stats. 1985, ch. 465; Stats. 2002, ch. 415, effective Sept. 9, 2002; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2014, ch. 429; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

**§ 6022** (Origin: State Bar Act, § 18. Repealed by Stats. 2019, ch. 698.)

### **§ 6023 Continuanance in Office**

The officers of the State Bar shall continue in office until their successors are appointed or selected. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 19. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6024 Duties of Officers**

The chair shall preside at all meetings of the State Bar and of the board, and in the event of his or her absence or inability to act, the vice chair shall preside.

Other duties of the chair and the vice chair, and the duties of the secretary, shall be such as the board may prescribe. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 17. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 465; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6025 Rules and Regulations; Meetings and Quorum**

Subject to the laws of this state, the board may formulate and declare rules and regulations necessary or expedient for the carrying out of this chapter. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 27. Amended by Stats. 2019, ch. 698.)

**§ 6026** (Origin: State Bar Act, § 40. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Repealed by Stats. 2019, ch. 698.)

**§ 6026.5** (Added by Stats. 2015, ch. 537. Repealed by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

### **§ 6026.7 Meetings of the Board of Trustees—Open Meeting Requirements**

(a) The State Bar is subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code) and all meetings of the State Bar are subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

(b) Notwithstanding any other law, the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act shall not apply to the Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission or the State Bar Court.

(c) In addition to the grounds authorized in the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, a closed session may be held for those meetings, or portions thereof, relating to any of the following:

(1) Appeals from decisions of the Board of Legal Specialization refusing to certify or recertify an applicant or suspending or revoking a specialist's certificate.

(2) The preparation of examination materials, the approval, the grading, or the security of test administration of examinations for certification of a specialist.

(3) The preparation of examination materials, the approval, the grading, or the security of test administration of the California Bar Examination or the First-Year Law Students' Examination.

(4) Matters related to the Committee of Bar Examiners' consideration of moral character, including allegations of criminal or professional misconduct, competence, or physical or mental health of an individual, requests by applicants for testing accommodations in connection with an application for admission to practice law, or appeals of the Committee of Bar Examiners' determinations.

(5) Information about a law school's operations that constitutes a trade secret as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 3426.1 of the Civil Code.

(6) Matters related to the board's consideration of waiving confidentiality related to records of

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disciplinary proceedings under subdivision (c) of Section 6086.1.

(d) Notwithstanding subdivision (e) of Section 11125.7 of the Government Code, the State Bar shall accept public comment in open session on all matters that are agendized for discussion or decision by the board of trustees, whether in an open or a closed session.

(e) The Committee of Bar Examiners shall not be considered an advisory board, advisory commission, advisory committee, advisory subcommittee, or similar multimember advisory body, as described in Section 11123.5 of the Government Code, for purposes of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. (Former § 6026.7 added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417, repealed by Stats. 2015, ch. 537. New § 6026.7 added by Stats. 2015, ch. 537, operative April 1, 2016. Amended by Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2020, ch. 360; Stats. 2023, ch. 697; Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

### **§ 6026.11 Conformance with the California Public Records Act**

The State Bar is subject to the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code) and all public records and writings of the State Bar are subject to the California Public Records Act. (Added by Stats. 2015, ch. 537. Amended by Stats. 2021, ch. 615.)

### **§ 6027 Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the State Bar may be held at such times and places as the board provides. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 41.)

### **§ 6028 Payment of Expenses; Compensation**

(a) The board may make appropriations and disbursements from the funds of the State Bar to pay all necessary expenses for effectuating the purposes of this chapter.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision (c), no member of the board shall receive any other compensation than his or her necessary expenses connected with the performance of his or her duties as a member of the board.

(c) Public members of the board appointed pursuant to the provisions of Section 6013.5, and public members

of the examining committee appointed pursuant to Section 6046.5 shall receive, out of funds appropriated by the board for this purpose, fifty dollars (\$50) per day for each day actually spent in the discharge of official duties, but in no event shall this payment exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) per month. In addition, these public members shall receive, out of funds appropriated by the board, necessary expenses connected with the performance of their duties. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 28. Amended by Stats. 1977, ch. 304, effective July 8, 1977; Stats. 1982, ch. 327, effective June 30, 1982; Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 2004, ch. 529.)

### **§ 6029 Appointment of Committees, Officers and Employees; Salaries and Expenses**

(a) The board may appoint such committees, officers and employees as it deems necessary or proper, and fix and pay salaries and necessary expenses.

(b) The members of the executive committee of the board shall include at least one board member appointed by each of the following appointing authorities:

- (1) The Supreme Court.
- (2) The Governor.
- (3) The Speaker of the Assembly.
- (4) The Senate Committee on Rules. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 22. Amended by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

### **§ 6030 Executive Functions; Enforcement of Chapter; Injunction**

The board shall be charged with the executive function of the State Bar and the enforcement of the provisions of this chapter. The violation or threatened violation of any provision of Articles 7 (commencing with Section 6125) and 9 (commencing with Section 6150) of this chapter may be enjoined in a civil action brought in the superior court by the State Bar and no undertaking shall be required of the State Bar. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 21. Amended by Stats. 1961, ch. 2033.)

**§ 6031 Functions in Aid of Jurisprudence, Justice; Evaluation of Justices**

(a) The board may aid in all matters pertaining to the advancement of the science of jurisprudence or to the improvement of the administration of justice.

(b) Notwithstanding this section or any other law, the board shall not conduct or participate in, or authorize any committee, agency, employee, or commission of the State Bar to conduct or participate in any evaluation, review, or report on the qualifications, integrity, diligence, or judicial ability of any specific justice of a court provided for in Section 2 or 3 of Article VI of the California Constitution without prior review and statutory authorization by the Legislature.

The provisions of this subdivision shall not be construed to prohibit a licensee of the State Bar from conducting or participating in such an evaluation, review, or report in his or her individual capacity.

The provisions of this subdivision shall not be construed to prohibit an evaluation of potential judicial appointees or nominees as authorized by Section 12011.5 of the Government Code. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 23. Amended by Stats. 1945, ch. 177; Stats. 1984, ch. 16; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6031.5 Conference of Delegates, State Bar Sections—Restriction on Funding, Voluntary Fees**

(a) The California Lawyers Association and its activities shall not be funded with mandatory fees collected pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 6140.

The State Bar may provide the California Lawyers Association with administrative and support services, provided the California Lawyers Association agrees, before such services are provided, to the nature, scope, and cost of those services. The State Bar shall be reimbursed for the full cost of those services out of funds collected pursuant to subdivision (b) or funds provided by the California Lawyers Association. The financial audit specified in Section 6145 shall confirm that the amount assessed by the State Bar for providing the services reimburses the costs of providing them, and shall verify that mandatory fees are not used to fund the California Lawyers Association. The State Bar and the California Lawyers Association may also contract for other services provided by the State Bar or by the California Lawyers Association.

(b) Notwithstanding any other law, the State Bar shall collect fees for the California Lawyers Association provided the Board of Trustees of the State Bar determines that the California Lawyers Association continues to serve a public purpose by providing the services described in subdivision (f) of Section 6056. The California Lawyers Association shall pay for the actual costs of the collection.

(c) (1) Notwithstanding any other law, the State Bar is expressly authorized to collect, in conjunction with the State Bar's collection of its annual license fees up to and through the collection of fees authorized for the year 2019, voluntary fees or donations on behalf of the Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations, the independent nonprofit successor entity to the former Conference of Delegates of the State Bar which has been incorporated for the purposes of aiding in matters pertaining to the advancement of the science of jurisprudence or to the improvement of the administration of justice, and to convey any unexpended voluntary fees or donations previously made to the Conference of Delegates of the State Bar pursuant to this section to the Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations. The Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations shall pay for the cost of the collection. The State Bar and the Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations may also contract for other services. The financial audit specified in Section 6145 shall confirm that the amount of any contract shall fully cover the costs of providing the services, and shall verify that mandatory fees are not used to fund any successor entity.

(2) The Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations, which is the independent nonprofit successor entity to the former Conference of Delegates of the State Bar as referenced in paragraph (1), is a voluntary association, is not a part of the State Bar of California, and shall not be funded in any way through mandatory fees collected by the State Bar of California. Any contribution or membership option included with a State Bar of California mandatory fees billing statement shall include a statement that the Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations is not a part of the State Bar of California and that membership in that organization is voluntary.

(3) This subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1, 2020. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 342. Amended by Stats. 2002, ch. 415, effective September 9, 2002; Stats. 2003, ch. 334; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

**§ 6032 California Supreme Court Historical Society; Funding; Fees**

Notwithstanding any other law, the State Bar is expressly authorized to collect, in conjunction with the State Bar's collection of its annual license fees, voluntary fees on behalf of and for the purpose of funding the California Supreme Court Historical Society, which advances the science of jurisprudence by preserving and disseminating to the general public the history of the Supreme Court and the Judicial Branch. (Added by Stats. 2002, ch. 415, effective September 9, 2002. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6032.1 Funding of California ChangeLawyers**

Notwithstanding any other law, the State Bar is expressly authorized to collect, in conjunction with the State Bar's collection of its annual license fees, voluntary donations on behalf of and for the purpose of funding California ChangeLawyers, which promotes a better justice system for all Californians. (Added by Stats. 2019, ch. 698.)

**§ 6032.5 Public Interest Attorney Loan Repayment Account**

(a) The Public Interest Attorney Loan Repayment Account is hereby established within the State Treasury.

(b) Funds from an IOLTA account that escheat to the state and are deposited into the Public Interest Attorney Loan Repayment Account pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 1564.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure shall be used, upon appropriation by the Legislature, by the Student Aid Commission for the purpose of providing increased funding for, both the administration of and the provision of loan assistance pursuant to, the Public Interest Attorney Loan Repayment Program pursuant to Article 12 (commencing with Section 69740) of Chapter 2 of Part 42 of Division 5 of Title 3 of the Education Code. (Added by Stats. 2015, ch. 488.)

**§ 6033 Nonprofit Organizations Providing Free Legal Services—Collection of Voluntary Financial Support; Task Force Study**

(a) Notwithstanding any other law, the State Bar is expressly authorized to facilitate the professional responsibilities of licensees by collecting, in conjunction with the State Bar's collection of its annual license fees or otherwise, voluntary financial support for nonprofit organizations that provide free legal services to persons of limited means. All funds received for programs related to this section shall be distributed to qualified legal services projects and support centers as provided in Section 6216 without deduction for administrative fees, costs, or expenses by the State Bar. Any fees, costs, or expenses associated with administering this section shall be absorbed within the costs allowed by and paid from the funds specified in Section 6216.

(b) To implement this section, the State Bar, in consultation with the Chief Justice of California, shall appoint a task force of key stakeholders to analyze the mechanisms and experience of bar associations that have adopted programs for the collection of financial contributions from bar licensees and shall propose an appropriate method for facilitating the collection and distribution of voluntary contributions that is best calculated to generate the greatest level of financial support and participation from State Bar licensees, taking into account such issues as the justice-gap between the legal needs of low-income people in California and the legal resources available to assist them. The method and any recommended voluntary contribution amount adopted by the Board of Trustees of the State Bar of California shall be implemented for the 2008 fiscal year, and shall be reviewed and adjusted as needed after two years and, thereafter, every five years as needed, in consultation with affected service providers and other key stakeholders. (Added by Stats. 2006, ch. 165. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2014, ch. 429; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6034 Collection of Unpaid Amounts Owed to State Bar**

(a) The State Bar of California is authorized and directed to participate as a state agency in the Interagency Intercept Collections Program established pursuant to Section 12419.2 of the Government Code for the collection of any unpaid amounts owed to the State Bar of California, including any fine, penalty, assessment, cost, or reimbursement imposed under Section 6086.10,

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subdivision (c) of Section 6140.5, and any other applicable law. All funds received by the State Bar of California shall be deposited in the State Bar's general fund.

(b) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2026, and as of that date is repealed. (Added by Stats. 2013, ch. 681. Amended by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6034.1 Prioritizing Consumer Protection and Access to Justice in Legal Sandbox Initiatives**

(a) Any entity of the State Bar of California exploring a regulatory sandbox shall do all of the following:

(1) Prioritize protecting individuals, especially those in need of legal assistance, from unscrupulous actors, including those actors seeking to do business in the legal field, above all else.

(2) Prioritize increasing access to justice for persons who qualify for legal assistance from qualified legal services organizations or from State Department of Social Services-funded immigration legal services.

(3) Exclude corporate ownership of law firms and splitting legal fees with nonlawyers, which has historically been banned by common law and statute due to grave concerns that it could undermine consumer protection by creating conflicts of interests that are difficult to overcome and fundamentally infringe on the basic and paramount obligations of attorneys to their clients.

(4) Adhere to, and not propose any abrogation of, the restrictions on the unauthorized practice of law, including, but not limited to, Sections 13405 and 16951 of the Corporations Code.

(b) This section does not limit the State Bar's ability to provide limited practice licenses to law students and law graduates under certain conditions, and with the supervision of an active State Bar-licensed attorney.

(c) This section does not limit the examination of the use of technology to increase access to justice for persons who qualify for legal assistance from qualified legal services organizations or from State Department of Social Services-funded immigration legal services, low-income individuals, and small businesses, so long as proposals adhere to, and do not propose any abrogation of, the restrictions on the unauthorized practice of law,

including, but not limited to, Sections 13405 and 16951 of the Corporations Code.

(d) This section does not preclude the State Bar from seeking feedback from legal services organizations, including organizations that provide legal services in family law and immigration law, community-based organizations, and consumers about options for increasing access to legal services.

(e) The State Bar shall not expend any funds, regardless of the source, on activities that do not meet the requirements of this section.

(f) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2025. (Added by Stats. 2022, ch. 419.)

## **ARTICLE 2.5 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

### **§ 6035 Definitions**

Unless the contrary is stated or clearly appears from the context, the definitions set forth in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 82000) of Title 9 of the Government Code shall govern the interpretation of this article. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 752, effective September 14, 1978.)

### **§ 6036 Disqualification of Member for Financial or Personal Conflict; Exceptions; Disclosure**

(a) Any member of the board of trustees shall disqualify themselves from making, participating in the making of, or attempting to influence any decisions of the State Bar in which the member has a financial interest, as that term is defined in Section 87103 of the Government Code, that it is reasonably foreseeable may be affected materially by the decision.

(b) Any member of the board of trustees shall likewise disqualify themselves when there exists a personal interest that may prevent the member from applying disinterested skill and undivided loyalty to the State Bar in making or participating in the making of decisions.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivisions (a) and (b), no member shall be prevented from making or participating in the making of any decision to the extent that the member's participation is legally required for the action

or decision to be made. The fact that a member's vote is needed to break a tie does not make the member's participation legally required for the purposes of this section.

(d) A member required to disqualify himself because of a conflict of interest shall (1) immediately disclose the interest, (2) withdraw from any participation in the matter, (3) refrain from attempting to influence another member, and (4) refrain from voting. It is sufficient for the purpose of this section that the member indicate only that the member has a disqualifying financial or personal interest.

(e) For purposes of this article and unless otherwise specified, "member" means any appointed or elected member of the board of trustees. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 752, effective September 14, 1978; Stats. 2005, ch. 341; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

**§ 6037 Violations by Members; Validity of Action or Decision of Board; Termination of Member; Misdemeanor; Civil and Criminal Penalties**

No action or decision of the State Bar shall be invalid because of the participation therein by a member or members of the board of trustees in violation of Section 6036. However, any member who intentionally violates the provisions of subdivision (a) of Section 6036 is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding five days, or by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or by both, and, if the member is an attorney member of the board, a certified copy of the record of conviction shall be transmitted to the Supreme Court for disposition as provided in Sections 6101 and 6102. Upon entry of final judgment of conviction, the member's term of office on the board of trustees, and duties and authority incidental thereto, shall automatically terminate. Any member who intentionally violates the provisions of subdivision (b) of Section 6036 shall be liable for a civil penalty not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) for each violation, which shall be assessed and recovered in a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction brought in the name of the state only by a district attorney of a county in which the member resides or maintains offices and the penalty collected shall be paid to the treasurer of that county. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 752, effective September 14, 1978. Amended by Stats. 1981, ch. 714; Stats. 1983, ch. 1092; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

**§ 6038 Governmental Decisions of Specified State Agencies; Applicability of Conflict of Interest Provisions to Members Thereof**

Attorney members of the Judicial Council, members of the Commission on Judicial Performance who are not judges, and employees designated in the Conflict of Interest Code of the State Bar of California are subject to provisions of this article with respect to making, participating in the making, or attempting to influence, governmental decisions of their respective state agencies other than decisions of a judicial or quasi-judicial nature. (Added by Stats. 1984, ch. 727, effective July 1, 1985.)

**ARTICLE 3  
INVESTIGATIONS, EXAMINING COMMITTEE,  
SUBPOENAS, AND OTHER PROCEEDINGS**

**§ 6040** (Origin: State Bar Act, § 30. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Repealed by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6041** (Origin: State Bar Act, § 30. Amended by Stats. 1981, ch. 836. Repealed by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6042** (Origin: State Bar Act, § 31. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Repealed by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6043** (Origin: State Bar Act, § 32. Amended by Stats. 1963, ch. 1496. Repealed by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6043.5 Complaints; False and Malicious**

(a) Every person who reports to the State Bar or causes a complaint to be filed with the State Bar that an attorney has engaged in professional misconduct, knowing the report or complaint to be false and malicious, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

(b) The State Bar may, in its discretion, notify the appropriate district attorney or city attorney that a person has filed what the State Bar believes to be a false and malicious report or complaint against an attorney and recommend prosecution of the person under subdivision (a). (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639.)

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### § 6044 Investigative Powers

The chief trial counsel, with or without the filing or presentation of any complaint, may initiate and conduct investigations of all matters affecting or relating to:

- (a) The discipline of the licensees of the State Bar.
- (b) The acts or practices of a person whom the chief trial counsel has reason to believe has violated or is about to violate any provision of Articles 7 (commencing with Section 6125) and 9 (commencing with Section 6150) of this chapter.
- (c) Any other matter within the jurisdiction of the State Bar. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 34. Amended by Stats. 1961, ch. 2033; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6044.5 Disclosure of Information from Investigations or Formal Proceedings

(a) When an investigation or formal proceeding concerns alleged misconduct which may subject a licensee to criminal prosecution for any felony, or any lesser crime committed during the course of the practice of law, or in any manner that the client of the licensee was a victim, or may subject the licensee to disciplinary charges in another jurisdiction, the State Bar shall disclose, in confidence, information not otherwise public under this chapter to the appropriate agency responsible for criminal or disciplinary enforcement or exchange that information with that agency.

(b) The Chief Trial Counsel or designee may disclose, in confidence, information not otherwise public under this chapter as follows:

- (1) To government agencies responsible for enforcement of civil and criminal laws or for professional licensing of individuals.
- (2) To members of the Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission or a review committee thereof as to matters concerning nominees in any jurisdiction. (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159. Amended by Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6045** (Origin: State Bar Act, § 33. Repealed by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6046 Examining Committee; Powers; Composition

The board may establish an examining committee having the power:

- (a) To examine all applicants for admission to practice law.
- (b) To administer the requirements for admission to practice law.
- (c) To certify to the Supreme Court for admission those applicants who fulfill the requirements provided in this chapter.

The examining committee shall be comprised of 19 members, 10 of whom shall be licensees of the State Bar or judges of courts of record in this state and nine of whom shall be public members who have never been licensees of the State Bar or admitted to practice before any court in the United States. At least one of the attorney members shall have been admitted to practice law in this state within three years from the date of the member's appointment to the examining committee. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 24. Amended by Stats. 1986, ch. 1392; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6046.2 Adoption of Uniform Bar Examination Report

(a) On or before November 30, 2026, the Committee of Bar Examiners shall provide a report to the board of trustees, the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, and to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary pursuant to Section 9795 of the Government Code on whether adopting a uniform bar examination, including, but not limited to, the National Conference of Bar Examiners' Uniform Bar Examination or any successor or replacement of that exam, would be more efficient to administer and lower the cost of administration for the State Bar and examinees.

(b) This section is repealed on January 1, 2030, pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 155.)

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### **§ 6046.5 Examining Committee Public Member Appointments; Term; Rights and Duties**

Three of the public members of the examining committee shall be appointed by the Senate Rules Committee, three of the public members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, and three of the public members shall be appointed by the Governor. They shall serve for a term of four years, except that of the initial public members so appointed, two shall serve for two years and four shall serve for four years, as shall be determined by lot. The public members appointed pursuant to the amendment of this section during the 1987-88 Regular Session of the Legislature shall serve for four years. The public members shall have the same rights, powers, and privileges as any attorney member except that such a member shall not participate in the drafting of questions submitted to applicants on the California Bar examination. (Added by Stats. 1975, ch. 874. Amended by Stats. 1986, ch. 1392; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 1996, ch. 866; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6046.6 Alterations to Bar Examination; Dealings with Law School Council and Deans; Scaling; Notice of Use of Artificial Intelligence**

- (a) (1) (A) The Committee of Bar Examiners shall not alter the bar examination in a manner that requires the substantial modification of the training or preparation required for passage of the examination, except after giving two years' notice of that change.

(B) This requirement does not apply to a change in the bar examination that is applicable only at the option of the applicant.

- (2) The Committee of Bar Examiners shall not change the vendor or creator of the multiple choice questions except after giving 18 months' notice of that change. This paragraph shall not apply to the vendor of multiple choice questions used for the July 2025 bar examination.

- (3) The Committee of Bar Examiners shall not authorize a remote administration of the bar examination except after giving two years' notice of that change.

- (b) The Committee of Bar Examiners shall communicate and cooperate with the Law School Council and deans, or their designees, of law schools

approved by the American Bar Association or the Committee of Bar Examiners.

- (c) Scaling may be used on the bar examination for the purpose of maintaining an examination of uniform difficulty from year to year.

- (d) (1) Any alteration to the bar examination that constitutes either of the following shall require at least 120 days notice:

(A) Changes that affect the user experience with testing software.

(B) Changes to the medium in which testing materials are provided.

- (2) The notice requirement shall not apply to updates to the software necessary for any of the following:

(A) To satisfy bar examination security requirements.

(B) To ensure compatibility with new or updates to operating systems, chipsets, or hardware.

(C) To comply with web content accessibility guidelines or otherwise make the software more accessible.

(D) To improve efficiency of the system architecture.

- (e) The Committee of Bar Examiners shall provide notice if artificial intelligence is used in creating questions for the bar examination or grading of the bar examination.

- (f) The changes made to subdivision (a) by the act that added this subdivision are to apply to any changes made from the July 2025 bar examination. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1392. Amended by Stats. 1996, ch. 866; Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

### **§ 6046.7 Adoption of Rules for the Regulation and Oversight of Unaccredited Law Schools—Collection of Fees to Fund Regulatory Responsibilities**

- (a) Notwithstanding any other law, the examining committee shall be responsible for the approval, regulation, and oversight of degree-granting

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unaccredited law schools that meet both of the following:

- (1) Award the juris doctor (J.D.) professional degree in California.
- (2) Are not approved by the American Bar Association or the Committee of Bar Examiners.

(b) The Committee of Bar Examiners shall assess and collect a fee from unaccredited law schools in an amount sufficient to fund the regulatory and oversight responsibilities imposed by this section. Nothing in this subdivision precludes the board of trustees from using other funds or fees collected by the State Bar or by the examining committee to supplement the funding of the regulatory and oversight responsibilities imposed by this section with other funds, if that supplemental funding is deemed necessary and appropriate to mitigate some of the additional costs of the regulation and oversight to facilitate the provision of a legal education at an affordable cost. (Added by Stats. 2006, ch. 534. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6046.8 Evaluation of Bar Exam Adjustment of Exam or Passing Score; Report to Supreme Court and Legislature**

(a) At least once every seven years, or more frequently if directed by the Supreme Court, the board of trustees shall oversee an evaluation of the bar examination to determine if it properly tests for minimally needed competence for entry-level attorneys and shall make a determination, supported by findings, whether to adjust the examination or the passing score based on the evaluation.

(b) The board of trustees shall report the results of the evaluation and any determination regarding adjustment in the passing score to the Supreme Court and the Legislature no later than March 15, 2018, and at least every seven years from the date of the previous report.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (b), the report due in 2025 shall be deferred for a period of time not to exceed seven years from the deployment of a new bar examination developed in accordance with the order of the California Supreme Court. (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 422. Amended by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6047 Rules and Regulations of Examining Committee**

Subject to the approval of the board, the examining committee may adopt such reasonable rules and regulations as may be necessary or advisable for the purpose of making effective the qualifications prescribed in Article 4. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 24.1.)

**§ 6048** (Origin: State Bar Act, § 26. Repealed by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6049 Power to Take Evidence, Administer Oaths, and Issue Subpoenas**

(a) In the conduct of investigations and upon the trial and hearing of all matters, the State Bar Court may do all of the following:

(1) Take and hear evidence pertaining to the proceeding.

(2) Administer oaths and affirmations.

(3) Compel, by subpoena, the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers and documents pertaining to the proceeding.

(b) In the conduct of investigations, the chief trial counsel or his or her designee, may compel, by subpoena, the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, and documents pertaining to the investigation.

(c) In the conduct of all formal proceedings, each party may compel, by subpoena, the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, and documents pertaining to the proceeding. (Origin: State Bar Act, §§ 26, 34. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6049.1 Professional Misconduct Proceeding in Another Jurisdiction; Expedited Disciplinary Proceeding**

(a) In any disciplinary proceeding under this chapter, a certified copy of a final order made by any court of record or any body authorized by law or by rule of court to conduct disciplinary proceedings against attorneys, of the United States or of any state or territory of the United States or of the District of Columbia, determining

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that a licensee of the State Bar committed professional misconduct in such other jurisdiction shall be conclusive evidence that the licensee is culpable of professional misconduct in this state, subject only to the exceptions set forth in subdivision (b).

(b) The board may provide by rule for procedures for the conduct of an expedited disciplinary proceeding against a licensee of the State Bar upon receipt by the State Bar of a certified copy of a final order determining that the licensee has been found culpable of professional misconduct in a proceeding in another jurisdiction conducted as specified in subdivision (a). The issues in the expedited proceeding shall be limited to the following:

- (1) The degree of discipline to impose.
- (2) Whether, as a matter of law, the licensee's culpability determined in the proceeding in the other jurisdiction would not warrant the imposition of discipline in the State of California under the laws or rules binding upon licensees of the State Bar at the time the licensee committed misconduct in such other jurisdiction, as determined by the proceedings specified in subdivision (a).
- (3) Whether the proceedings of the other jurisdiction lacked fundamental constitutional protection.

The licensee of the State Bar subject to the proceeding under this section shall bear the burden of establishing that the issues in paragraphs (2) and (3) do not warrant the imposition of discipline in this state.

(c) In proceedings conducted under subdivision (b), the parties need not be afforded an opportunity for discovery unless the State Bar Court department or panel having jurisdiction so orders upon a showing of good cause.

(d) In any proceedings conducted under this chapter, a duly certified copy of any portion of the record of disciplinary proceedings of another jurisdiction conducted as specified in subdivision (a) may be received in evidence.

(e) This section shall not prohibit the institution of proceedings under Section 6044, 6101, or 6102, as may be appropriate, concerning any licensee of the State Bar based upon the licensee's conduct in another jurisdiction, whether or not licensed as an attorney in the

other jurisdiction. (Added by Stats. 1985, ch. 453. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6049.2 Introduction of Transcripts of Testimony Given in Contested Civil Action or Special Proceeding**

In all disciplinary proceedings pursuant to this chapter, the testimony of a witness given in a contested civil action or special proceeding to which the person complained against is a party, or in whose behalf the action or proceeding is prosecuted or defended, may be received in evidence, so far as relevant and material to the issues in the disciplinary proceedings, by means of a duly authenticated transcript of such testimony and without proof of the nonavailability of the witness; provided, the State Bar Court may order the production of and testimony by such witness, in lieu of or in addition to receiving a transcript of his or her testimony and may decline to receive in evidence any such transcript of testimony, in whole or in part, when it appears that the testimony was given under circumstances that did not require or allow an opportunity for full cross-examination. (Added by Stats. 1961, ch. 2033. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6050 Disobedience of Subpoena as Contempt**

Whenever any person subpoenaed to appear and give testimony or to produce books, papers or documents refuses to appear or testify before the subpoenaing body, or to answer any pertinent or proper questions, or to produce such books, papers or documents, he or she is in contempt of the subpoenaing body. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 34. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 453.)

### **§ 6051 Attachment for Disobeying Subpoena; Proceedings and Punishment; Alternative Procedure; Order to Show Cause**

The State Bar Court or the chief trial counsel may report the fact that a person under subpoena is in contempt of the subpoenaing body to the superior court in and for the county in which the proceeding, investigation or other matter is being conducted and thereupon the court may issue an attachment in the form usual in the superior court, directed to the sheriff of the county, commanding the sheriff to attach the person and immediately bring him or her before the court.

On the return of the attachment, and the production of the person attached, the superior court has jurisdiction of the matter, and the person charged may purge himself or herself of the contempt in the same way, and the same proceedings shall be had, and the same penalties may be imposed, and the same punishment inflicted, as in the case of a witness subpoenaed to appear and give evidence on the trial of a civil cause before a superior court.

In lieu of the procedure specified above, the court may enter an order directing the person alleged to be in contempt to appear before the court at a specified time and place and then and there show cause why he or she has not attended or testified or produced the writings as required. A copy of the order shall be served upon that person. If it appears to the court that the subpoena was regularly issued and no good cause is shown for the refusal to appear or testify or produce the writings, the court shall enter an order that the person appear, testify, or produce writings, as the case may be. Upon failure to obey the order, the person shall be dealt with as for contempt of court.

A proceeding pursuant to this section shall be entitled "In the Matter of (state name), Alleged Contemnor re State Bar (proceeding, investigation or matter) No. (insert number)." (Origin: State Bar Act, § 34. Amended by Stats. 1963, ch. 1496; Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### **§ 6051.1 Motion to Quash Subpoena**

A motion to quash a subpoena issued pursuant to Section 6049 shall be brought in the State Bar Court. (Added by Stats. 1985, ch. 453.)

#### **§ 6052 Administration of Oaths; Issuance of Subpoenas; Depositions**

The State Bar Court or the chief trial counsel, or their designee, may administer oaths and issue any subpoena pursuant to Section 6049.

Depositions may be taken and used as provided in the rules of procedure adopted by the board pursuant to this chapter. (Amended by Stats. 1961, ch. 2033; Stats. 1965, ch. 290; Stats. 1981 ch. 184; Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 2019, ch. 698.)

#### **§ 6053 Examination of Mental or Physical Condition, Reports**

Whenever in an investigation or proceeding provided for or authorized by this chapter, the mental or physical condition of the licensee of the State Bar is a material issue, the board or the committee having jurisdiction may order the licensee to be examined by one or more physicians or psychiatrists designated by it. The reports of such persons shall be made available to the licensee and the State Bar and may be received in evidence in such investigation or proceeding. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1374, operative July 1, 1969. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### **§ 6054 Criminal History Information; Fingerprinting**

(a) State and local law enforcement and licensing bodies and departments, officers and employees thereof, and officials and attachés of the courts of this state shall cooperate with and give reasonable assistance and information, including the providing of state summary criminal history information and local summary criminal history information, to the State Bar of California or any authorized representative thereof, in connection with any investigation or proceeding within the jurisdiction of the State Bar of California, regarding the admission to the practice of law or discipline of attorneys or their reinstatement to the practice of law.

(b) The State Bar of California shall require that an applicant for admission or reinstatement to the practice of law in California, or may require a licensee, to submit or resubmit fingerprints to the Department of Justice and to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in order to establish the identity of the applicant and in order to determine whether the applicant or licensee has a record of criminal conviction in this state or in other states, including through a national criminal history check.

(c) (1) Pursuant to subdivision (u) of Section 11105 of the Penal Code, the State Bar shall submit to the Department of Justice fingerprint images and related information required by the Department of Justice for all persons applying for admission to the State Bar of California for all applicants for reinstatement, and for all active and inactive licensees of the State Bar who are seeking to change their license status from inactive to active or whose fingerprints have not otherwise been

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submitted to the Department of Justice for the purposes described in this section. The Department of Justice shall provide a state or federal level response pursuant to subdivision (p) of Section 11105 of the Penal Code.

(2) As used in this subdivision, “applicant for reinstatement” means individuals initiating reinstatement proceedings with the State Bar after resignation with or without charges pending and after disbarment.

(d) The State Bar may use the information obtained from the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a result of the fingerprinting of an applicant or licensee, and the State Bar’s use of that information shall be limited to the official use of the State Bar in establishing the identity of the applicant and in determining the character and fitness of the applicant for admission or reinstatement, and in discovering prior and subsequent criminal arrests of an applicant, licensee, or applicant for reinstatement. The State Bar shall notify the Department of Justice about individuals who are no longer licensees and applicants who are denied admission to the State Bar within 30 days of any change in status of a licensee or denial of admission. All fingerprint records of applicants admitted or licensees reinstated, or provided by a licensee, shall be retained thereafter by the Department of Justice for the limited purpose of criminal arrest notification to the State Bar.

(e) If required to be fingerprinted pursuant to this section, a licensee of the State Bar who fails to be fingerprinted may be enrolled as an inactive licensee pursuant to rules adopted by the board of trustees. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 78. Amended by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2023, ch. 697; Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### ARTICLE 3.5 CALIFORNIA LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

#### § 6055 Nonprofit Association Act

This article shall be known, and may be cited, as the Nonprofit Association Act. (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

#### § 6056 Creation of Association; Nature of Corporation; Governance; Assistance from State Bar

(a) The State Bar, acting pursuant to Section 6001, shall assist the Sections of the State Bar to incorporate as a private, nonprofit corporation organized under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code and shall transfer the functions and activities of the 16 State Bar Sections and the California Young Lawyers Association to the new private, nonprofit corporation, to be called the California Lawyers Association. The California Lawyers Association shall be a voluntary association, shall not be a part of the State Bar, and shall not be funded in any way through mandatory fees collected by the State Bar. The California Lawyers Association shall have independent contracting authority and full control of its resources. The California Lawyers Association shall not be considered a state, local, or other public body for any purpose, including, but not limited to, the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code) and the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(b) The California Lawyers Association shall establish the criteria for membership in the California Young Lawyers Association. The California Lawyers Association may change the name of the California Young Lawyers Association to another name consistent with the criteria for membership and its mission.

(c) The State Bar may assist the California Lawyers Association in gaining appointment to the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates, consistent with the California Lawyers Association’s mission and subject to the consent of the ABA.

(d) The State Bar shall support the California Lawyers Association’s efforts to partner with the Continuing Education of the Bar (CEB), subject to agreement by the University of California.

(e) The State Bar of California shall ensure that State Bar staff who support the Sections, as of September 15, 2017, are reassigned to other comparable positions within the State Bar.

(f) The Sections of the State Bar or the California Lawyers Association and the State Bar shall enter into a memorandum of understanding regarding the terms of separation of the Sections of the State Bar from the State

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Bar and mandatory duties of the California Lawyers Association, including a requirement to provide all of the following:

- (1) Low- and no-cost mandatory continuing legal education (MCLE).
- (2) Expertise and information to the State Bar, as requested.
- (3) Educational programs and materials to the licensees of the State Bar and the public.

(g) The State Bar of California shall assist the California Lawyers Association in meeting the association's requirement to provide low- and no-cost MCLE by the inclusion on the State Bar's internet website of easily accessible links to the low- and no-cost MCLE provided by the California Lawyers Association. (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 422. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2021, ch. 723; Stats. 2022, ch. 28.)

### **§ 6056.3 Transfers from State Bar to Association**

(a) On or before January 31, 2018, the State Bar shall transfer to the Association all membership fees and other funds paid for membership in the sections or paid in sponsorships, donations, or funds for the benefit of the sections, including, but not limited to, State Bar section financial reserves, with an accounting that specifies which funds are attributable to each individual section of the Association. The State Bar shall work with the Association to transfer all contracts previously entered into by the State Bar on behalf of the sections, as soon as practicable, consistent with any contractual obligations and legal requirements, unless an alternative arrangement is mutually acceptable to the State Bar and the Association.

(b) On or before January 31, 2018, the State Bar shall provide an itemized list of any outstanding expenses, including contracts made on behalf of section activities.

(c) The State Bar and the Association shall confer and work cooperatively to establish an orderly transition plan.

(d) All current intellectual property of the Sections of the State Bar and the board of governors, currently in the possession of the State Bar, shall be transferred to and retained by the Association, including, but not limited to,

publications, educational materials, online education, membership lists of section members, and products.

(e) Programs created by the sections within the State Bar's online education catalog shall be transferred to the Association.

(f) The amount of the State Bar sections' reserves that are to be transferred shall be determined by cooperative review and accounting between the State Bar and the Association no later than January 31, 2018. If the State Bar and Sections of the State Bar do not agree on the amount by January 31, 2018, the parties shall submit the matter to binding arbitration by a neutral arbitrator who will determine the amount. If the parties cannot agree on a neutral arbitrator, each shall select a neutral arbitrator and the two neutral arbitrators shall select a single neutral arbitrator to determine the amount. The neutral arbitrator chosen to oversee the matter may hire an auditor to assist in this task. The fees charged by the arbitrator, including any auditor fees, shall be borne equally by the State Bar and the Association.

(g) The State Bar shall no longer include individual sections or voluntary organizations that are similar to Sections of the State Bar as they existed before being transferred to the Association. (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

## ARTICLE 4

### ADMISSION TO THE PRACTICE OF LAW

#### **§ 6060 Qualifications; Examination and Fee**

To be certified to the Supreme Court for admission and a license to practice law, a person who has not been admitted to practice law in a sister state, United States jurisdiction, possession, territory, or dependency or in a foreign country shall:

(a) Be at least 18 years of age.

(b) (1) Be of good moral character.

(2) (A) In reviewing whether an applicant is of good moral character under this subdivision, the staff of the State Bar or the members of the examining committee shall not review or consider the person's medical records relating to mental health, except

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if the applicant seeks to use the record for either of the following purposes:

- (i) To demonstrate that the applicant is of good moral character.
- (ii) As a mitigating factor to explain a specific act of misconduct.

(B) The staff of the State Bar and members of the examining committee shall not request or seek to review any medical records relating to mental health, including by obtaining the consent of the applicant to disclose such records, except as requested by an applicant and for a purpose specified in subparagraph (A).

(c) Before beginning the study of law, have done either of the following:

(1) Completed at least two years of college work, which college work shall be at least one-half of the collegiate work acceptable for a bachelor's degree granted on the basis of a four-year period of study by a college or university approved by the examining committee.

(2) Have attained in apparent intellectual ability the equivalent of at least two years of college work by taking examinations in subject matters and achieving the scores as are prescribed by the examining committee.

(d) Have registered with the State Bar as a law student within 90 days after beginning the study of law. The State Bar, upon a showing of good cause, may permit a later registration.

(e) Have done either of the following:

(1) Had conferred upon them a juris doctor (J.D.) degree or a bachelor of laws (LL.B.) degree by a law school accredited by the examining committee or approved by the American Bar Association.

(2) Studied law diligently and in good faith for at least four years in any of the following manners:

- (A) (i) In a law school that is authorized or approved to confer professional degrees and requires classroom attendance of its students for a minimum of 270 hours a year.

(ii) A person who has received their legal education in a foreign state or country where the common law of England does not constitute the basis of jurisprudence shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the State Bar that the person's education, experience, and qualifications qualify them to take the examination.

(B) In a law office in this state and under the personal supervision of a licensee of the State Bar of California who is, and for at least the last five years continuously has been, engaged in the active practice of law. It is the duty of the supervising attorney to render any periodic reports to the State Bar as required.

(C) In the chambers and under the personal supervision of a judge of a court of record of this state. It is the duty of the supervising judge to render any periodic reports to the State Bar as required.

(D) By instruction in law from a correspondence law school authorized or approved to confer professional degrees by this state, which requires 864 hours of preparation and study per year for four years.

(E) By any combination of the methods referred to in this paragraph.

(f) Have passed any examination in professional responsibility or legal ethics as the examining committee may prescribe.

(g) Have passed the general bar examination given by the examining committee.

(h) (1) Have passed a law students' examination administered by the examining committee after completion of their first year of law study. Those who pass the examination within its first three administrations upon becoming eligible to take the examination, shall receive credit for all law studies completed to the time the examination is passed. Those who do not pass the examination within the number of administrations allowed by this subdivision, upon becoming eligible to take the examination, but who subsequently pass the examination, shall receive credit for one year of legal study only.

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- (2) (A) This requirement does not apply to a student who has satisfactorily completed their first year of law study at a law school accredited by the examining committee and who has completed at least two years of college work prior to matriculating in the accredited law school, nor shall this requirement apply to an applicant who has passed the bar examination of a sister state or of a country in which the common law of England constitutes the basis of jurisprudence.

(B) The law students' examination shall be administered twice a year at reasonable intervals. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 24.2. Amended by Stats. 1953, ch. 1090; Stats. 1959, ch. 1084; Stats. 1970, ch. 251; Stats. 1971, ch. 1748; Stats. 1972, ch. 1285; Stats. 1973, ch. 1052; Stats. 1974, ch. 316, effective May 31, 1974; Stats. 1987, ch. 239; Stats. 1990, ch. 707, Stats. 1996, ch. 866; Stats. 2001, ch. 46; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2019, ch. 152; Stats. 2020, ch. 360; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **§ 6060.1 Violation of University or Law School Rules**

(a) Any disciplinary action taken against an individual at a university or an accredited law school for violation of university or law school rules of conduct shall not be used as the sole basis for denying the individual admission to practice law in the State of California.

(b) This section shall not apply to university or law school violations which involve moral turpitude or that result in criminal prosecution under the laws of the State of California or any other state. (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639.)

### **§ 6060.10 State Bar Exam Accessibility Reporting to Legislature**

(a) Commencing July 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the State Bar shall transmit to the Legislature a report detailing the number of complaints regarding access issues related to the biannual state bar exam detailed as follows:

- (1) The testing location in which the complaints occurred.

- (2) The nature of the access related complaints.
- (3) Accommodations provided to persons levying access related complaints.
- (4) Any additional information the State Bar determines to be relevant and necessary for the assessment of the existing programs for addressing access issues related to the biannual state bar exam.

(b) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2030, and as of that date is repealed. (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6060.2 Confidentiality of Proceedings re Moral Character**

(a) All investigations or proceedings conducted by the State Bar concerning the moral character of an applicant shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code) unless the applicant, in writing, waives the confidentiality.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the records of the proceeding may be disclosed in response to either of the following:

- (1) A lawfully issued subpoena.
- (2) A written request from a government agency responsible for either the enforcement of civil or criminal laws or the professional licensing of individuals that is conducting an investigation about the applicant. (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639. Amended by Stats. 2015, ch. 537, effective October 2, 2017; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2021, ch. 615.)

### **§ 6060.25 Confidentiality of Information Provided by Applicant to the State Bar for Admission and License to Practice Law**

(a) Notwithstanding any other law, any identifying information submitted by an applicant to the State Bar for admission and a license to practice law and all State Bar admission records, including, but not limited to, bar examination scores, law school grade point average (GPA), undergraduate GPA, Law School Admission Test

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scores, race or ethnicity, and any information contained within the State Bar Admissions database or any file or other data created by the State Bar with information submitted by the applicant that may identify an individual applicant, other than information described in subdivision (b), shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(b) Subject to existing state and federal laws protecting education records, subdivision (a) does not prohibit the disclosure of any of the following:

(1) The names of applicants who have passed any examination administered, given, or prescribed by the Committee of Bar Examiners.

(2) Information that is provided at the request of an applicant to another jurisdiction where the applicant is seeking admission to the practice of law.

(3) Information provided to a law school that is necessary for the purpose of the law school's compliance with accreditation or regulatory requirements. Beginning with the release of results from the July 2018 bar examination, the information provided to a law school shall also include the bar examination results of the law school's graduates allocated to the law school and the scores of any graduate allocated to the law school who did not pass the bar examination and who consents to the release of the graduate's scores to the law school. Consent of a law school graduate to the release of the graduate's scores may be obtained by a check-off on the graduate's application to take the bar examination. For purposes of this paragraph, "scores" means the same scores reported to a graduate who did not successfully pass the bar examination.

(4) Information provided to the National Conference of Bar Examiners or a successor nonprofit organization in connection to the State Bar's administration of any examination.

(5) This subdivision shall apply retroactively to January 1, 2016.

(c) Disclosure of any of the information in paragraphs (2) to (4), inclusive, of subdivision (b) shall not constitute a waiver under Section 7921.505 of the Government

Code of the exemption from disclosure provided for in subdivision (a) of this section.

(d) (1) Notwithstanding any other law except existing state and federal laws protecting education records, any information received from an educational or testing entity that is collected by the State Bar for the purpose of conducting a Law School Bar Exam Performance Study as the State Bar has been directed to do by the California Supreme Court by letter dated February 28, 2017, other than aggregate, summary, or statistical data that does not identify any person and does not provide substantial risk of identification of any person, shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(2) Nothing in this subdivision is intended to impact any litigation pending on the effective date of the measure that added this subdivision. (Added by Stats. 2015, ch. 537. Amended by Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2021, ch. 615.)

### **§ 6060.3 Late Filing Fees; Refunds**

(a) An application to take the California bar examination administered in February must be filed with the State Bar not later than the first business day of the preceding November, and an application to take the California bar examination administered in July must be filed with the State Bar not later than the first business day of the preceding April. However, an applicant who was unsuccessful on the examination last administered shall be allowed 10 business days from the date of the general announcement of results of that examination in which to timely file an application to take the next scheduled examination.

(b) The State Bar may accept applications to take the California bar examination filed after the timely deadlines specified in subdivision (a) from applicants if the application is accompanied by the timely application fee and the late filing fee fixed by the board as follows:

(1) An application to take the California bar examination filed between the first and last business days in November for the February examination or between the first and last business days of April for the July examination shall be

accepted if it is accompanied by the timely filing fee and a late fee not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50).

(2) An application to take the California bar examination filed between the last business day of November and January 1 for the February examination or between the last business day of April and June 1 for the July examination shall be accepted if it is accompanied by the timely filing fee and a late fee not to exceed two hundred fifty dollars (\$250).

(3) An application to take the California bar examination filed after January 1 for the February examination and after June 1 for the July examination shall not be accepted.

(c) Application fees for the California bar examination, including fees for late filing, shall be refunded if the applicant does not take the California bar examination because of the death of an immediate family member or the serious illness or disabling injury of the applicant or a member of their immediate family. A deduction may be made from the refund for administrative costs. The board shall adopt regulations for the administration of this subdivision. This subdivision shall not be construed to prohibit the refund of fees in instances other than those specified. (Former § 6060.3 added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1510 and 28, repealed by Stats. 1996, ch. 866. New § 6060.3 added by Stats. 1996, ch. 866. Amended by Stats. 2001, ch. 46; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

#### **§ 6060.5 Different Bar Examination for Particular Applicants**

Neither the board, nor any committee authorized by it, shall require that applicants for admission to practice law in California pass different final bar examinations depending upon the manner or school in which they acquire their legal education.

This section shall not prohibit the board, or any committee authorized by it, from establishing a different bar examination for applicants who are admitted to practice before the highest court of another state or of any jurisdiction where the common law of England constitutes the basis of jurisprudence. (Original section added by Stats. 1946, ch. 65; Repealed by Stats. 1959, ch. 1268; present section added by Stats. 1971, ch. 1666.)

#### **§ 6060.6 Identification Number in Lieu of Social Security Number**

Notwithstanding Section 30 of this code and Section 17520 of the Family Code, the Committee of Bar Examiners may accept for registration, and the State Bar may process for an original or renewed license to practice law, an application from an individual containing a federal tax identification number, or other appropriate identification number as determined by the State Bar, in lieu of a social security number, if the individual is not eligible for a social security account number at the time of application and is not in noncompliance with a judgment or order for support pursuant to Section 17520 of the Family Code. (Added by Stats. 2005, ch. 610.)

#### **§ 6060.7 Approval, Regulation and Oversight of Degree-Granting Law Schools by Examining Committee**

The examining committee shall be responsible for the approval, regulation, and oversight of degree-granting law schools that meet both of the following:

- (a) Award the juris doctor (J.D.) professional degree in California.
- (b) Are not approved by the American Bar Association. (Repealed and added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

**§ 6060.8** (Added by Stats. 1951, ch. 1722. Repealed by Stats. 1959, ch. 1268.)

#### **§ 6060.9 Accreditation of Law Schools; Prohibited Conditions**

Approval of any agency or agencies not existing under and by virtue of the laws of this State shall not be made a condition for accreditation of any California law school. (Added by Stats. 1957, ch. 647.)

#### **§ 6061 Disclosure Statements—Unaccredited Law Schools**

Any law school that is not accredited by the examining committee of the State Bar shall provide every student with a disclosure statement, subsequent to the payment of any application fee but prior to the payment of any registration fee, containing all of the following information:

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(a) The school is not accredited. However, in addition, if the school has been approved by other agencies, that fact may be so stated.

(b) Where the school has not been in operation for 10 years, the assets and liabilities of the school. However, if the school has had prior affiliation with another school that has been in operation more than 10 years, has been under the control of another school that has been in operation more than 10 years, or has been a successor to a school in operation more than 10 years, this subdivision is not applicable.

(c) The number and percentage of students who have taken and who have passed the first-year law student's examination and the final bar examination in the previous five years, or since the establishment of the school, whichever time is less, which shall include only those students who have been certified by the school to take the examinations.

(d) The number of legal volumes in the library. This subdivision does not apply to correspondence schools.

(e) The educational background, qualifications and experience of the faculty, and whether or not the faculty members and administrators (e.g., the dean) are licensees of the California State Bar.

(f) The ratio of faculty to students for the previous five years or since the establishment of the school, whichever time is less.

(g) Whether or not the school has applied for accreditation, and if so, the date of application and whether or not that application has been withdrawn, is currently pending, or has been finally denied. The school need only disclose information relating to applications made in the previous five years.

(h) That the education provided by the school may not satisfy the requirements of other states for the practice of law. Applicants should inquire regarding those requirements, if any, to the state in which they may wish to practice.

The disclosure statement required by this section shall be signed by each student, who shall receive as a receipt a copy of his or her signed disclosure statement. If any school does not comply with these requirements, it shall make a full refund of all fees paid by students.

Subject to approval by the board, the examining committee may adopt reasonable rules and regulations

as are necessary for the purpose of ensuring compliance with this section. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1392. Amended by Stats. 2006, ch. 534; Stats. 2007, ch. 130; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6061.5 Affiliation Disclosure—Unaccredited Law Schools**

A law school that is not accredited by the examining committee of the State Bar may refer to itself as a university or part of a university and, if it so refers to itself, shall state whether or not the law school is associated with an undergraduate school. (Added by Stats. 2006, ch. 534.)

### **§ 6061.7 Law Schools Not Approved by the American Bar Association; Website Disclosures; Required Information; Accuracy of Information**

(a) Any law school that is not approved by the American Bar Association shall publicly disclose on its Internet Web site, with a link from the Internet home page under "Admissions," all of the following information:

- (1) Admissions data.
- (2) Tuition, fees, and financial aid.
- (3) Conditional scholarships.
- (4) Enrollment data.
- (5) Number of full-time and part-time faculty, technically trained librarians, and administrators.
- (6) Average class size of each required course and the number of clinical offerings.
- (7) Employment outcomes for graduates.
- (8) Bar passage data.

(b) (1) The information in subdivision (a) shall be disclosed in a standardized information report that is readily accessible to current and prospective students in a manner that is complete, accurate, and not misleading to a reasonable student or applicant.

(2) The State Bar may create a standardized information report template.

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(3) Any law school that is not approved by the American Bar Association shall include the standardized information report as part of the annual compliance report required to be submitted to the State Bar by all law schools that are not approved by the American Bar Association and are regulated by the examining committee of the State Bar.

(4) A law school may use the information report template to comply with the information disclosure required under subdivision (a).

(c) Any law school that is not approved by the American Bar Association shall publicly disclose on its Internet Web site, in a readable and comprehensive manner, all of the following information on a current basis:

- (1) Refund policy.
- (2) Curricular offerings, academic calendar, and academic requirements.
- (3) Policy regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

(d) The law school's transfer of credit policy shall include, at a minimum, both of the following:

- (1) A statement of the criteria established by the law school regarding the acceptance of credit earned for coursework completed at another institution.
- (2) A list of institutions, if any, with which the law school has established an articulation agreement and the terms of any such agreement. If the law school has not entered into a transfer or articulation agreement with any other college or university, the institution shall disclose that fact.

(e) All information that a law school reports, publicizes, or distributes pursuant to this section shall be complete, accurate, and not misleading to a reasonable law school student or applicant. A law school shall use due diligence in obtaining and verifying such information.

(f) A law school that is not approved by the American Bar Association shall distribute the data required under paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) to all applicants being offered conditional scholarships at the time the scholarship offer is made.

(g) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Admissions data" means information from the most recently enrolled fall semester class including the total number of applications, the total number of accepted students, and the 75th, 50th, and 25th percentile scores for the undergraduate grade point averages and law school admission test scores of admitted students.

(2) "Bar passage data" means the most current cumulative bar pass rates defined and reported by the examining committee of the State Bar.

(3) "Conditional scholarship" means any financial aid award, the retention of which is dependent upon the student maintaining a minimum grade point average or class standing other than that ordinarily required to remain in good academic standing.

(4) "Curricular offering" means only those courses offered in the current and past two academic years.

(5) "Employment outcomes for graduates" means the results of a survey by the law school, taken three years after graduation, that breaks down the employment rate of graduates in each of the first three years after graduation, including the rate of employment of graduates in jobs where a Juris Doctor degree is required by the employer and the rate of employment of graduates in jobs where a Juris Doctor degree is an advantage in employment.

(6) "Enrollment data" means information about the number of students who are admitted to the school per class per year for the past three years, the number of students who transfer to and from the school per class per year for the past three years, and the number of students who do not continue to attend the school each year for the past three years on either a voluntary or involuntary basis.

(7) "Transfer or articulation agreement" means an agreement between the law school and any other college or university that provides for the transfer of credits earned in the program of instruction. (Added by Stats. 2016, ch. 87.)

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### § 6062 Out-of-State Attorneys

(a) To be certified to the Supreme Court for admission, and a license to practice law, a person who has been admitted to practice law in a sister state, United States jurisdiction, possession, territory, or dependency the United States may hereafter acquire shall:

- (1) Be of the age of at least 18 years
- (2) Be of good moral character.
- (3) Have passed the general bar examination given by the examining committee. However, if that person has been an active licensee in good standing of the bar of the admitting sister state or United States jurisdiction, possession, or territory for at least four years immediately preceding the first day of the examination applied for, he or she may elect to take the Attorneys' Examination rather than the general bar examination. Attorneys admitted less than four years and attorneys admitted four years or more in another jurisdiction but who have not been active licensees in good standing of their admitting jurisdiction for at least four years immediately preceding the first day of the examination applied for must take the general bar examination administered to general applicants not admitted as attorneys in other jurisdictions.
- (4) Have passed an examination in professional responsibility or legal ethics as the examining committee may prescribe.

(b) To be certified to the Supreme Court for admission, and a license to practice law, a person who has been admitted to practice law in a jurisdiction other than in a sister state, United States jurisdiction, possession, or territory shall:

- (1) Be of the age of at least 18 years.
- (2) Be of good moral character.
- (3) Have passed the general bar examination given by the examining committee.
- (4) Have passed an examination in professional responsibility or legal ethics as the examining committee may prescribe.

(c) The amendments to this section made at the 1997-98 Regular Session of the Legislature shall be applicable on and after January 1, 1997, and do not constitute a

change in, but are declaratory of, existing law. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 24.3. Amended by Stats. 1941, ch. 766; Stats. 1945, ch. 176; Stats. 1967, ch. 970; Stats. 1970, ch. 251; Stats. 1971, ch. 1748; Stats. 1972, ch. 1285; Stats. 1974, ch. 34; Stats. 1996, ch. 866; Stats. 1998, ch. 29, effective April 29, 1998; Stats. 2001, ch. 46; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**[Publisher's Note: The following paragraph concerns out-of-state attorneys and reciprocal admission to the State Bar of California. It was added by Stats. 2000, ch. 247, but not codified and is provided below for your information.]**

SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature that the Supreme Court of California should adopt rules permitting the admission to the practice of law in California of an attorney who is licensed in another state and who has not passed the California State Bar examination, if the state in which the attorney is licensed to practice affords the same opportunity to licensed attorneys from California. The Legislature also recognizes that the question of reciprocal admission is a complex one, and it, therefore, requests that the Supreme Court appoint a task force to study and make recommendations regarding whether and under what circumstances, attorneys who are licensed to practice law in other states and who have not passed the California State Bar examination may be permitted to practice law in California. The task force study should consider all of the following factors:

- (a) Years of practice in other states.
- (b) Admission to practice law in another state.
- (c) Specialization of the attorney's practice in another state.
- (d) The attorney's intended scope of practice in California.
- (e) The admission requirements in the state or states in which the attorney has been licensed to practice.
- (f) Reciprocity with and comity with other states.
- (g) Moral character requirements.
- (h) Disciplinary implications.
- (i) Consumer protection.

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### **§ 6063 Fees**

Applicants for admission to practice shall pay such reasonable fees, fixed by the board, as may be necessary to defray the expense of administering the provisions of this chapter, relating to admission to practice. These fees shall be collected by the State Bar and paid into the treasury of the State Bar. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 24.4. Amended by Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **§ 6064 Admission**

(a) Upon certification by the examining committee that the applicant has fulfilled the requirements for admission to practice law, the Supreme Court may admit the applicant as an attorney at law in all the courts of this state and may direct an order to be entered upon its records to that effect. A certificate of admission thereupon shall be given to the applicant by the clerk of the court.

(b) Upon certification by the examining committee that an applicant who is not lawfully present in the United States has fulfilled the requirements for admission to practice law, the Supreme Court may admit that applicant as an attorney at law in all the courts of this state and may direct an order to be entered upon its records to that effect. A certificate of admission thereupon shall be given to the applicant by the clerk of the court. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 24.5. Amended by Stats. 2013, ch. 573.)

### **§ 6064.1 Advocacy of Overthrow of Government**

No person who advocates the overthrow of the Government of the United States or of this State by force, violence, or other unconstitutional means, shall be certified to the Supreme Court for admission and a license to practice law. (Added by Stats. 1951, ch. 179.)

### **§ 6065 Inspection of Papers and Grading**

Any applicant for admission to practice who did not pass the California bar examination, for 30 days following the release of examination results, shall have electronic access to their answers to the written sessions of the bar examination, which shall include the ability to download, save, and print. (Added by Stats. 2002, ch. 415, effective September 9, 2002. Amended Stats. 2003, ch. 334; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

**§ 6065.5** (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 751. Repealed by Stats. 1978, ch. 751.)

### **§ 6066 Review of Refusal of Certification**

Any person refused certification to the Supreme Court for admission to practice may have the action of the board, or of any committee authorized by the board to make a determination on its behalf, pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, reviewed by the Supreme Court, in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the court. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 38.)

### **§ 6067 Oath**

Every person on his admission shall take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California, and faithfully to discharge the duties of any attorney at law to the best of his knowledge and ability. A certificate of the oath shall be indorsed upon his license. (Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34.)

### **§ 6068 Duties of Attorney**

It is the duty of an attorney to do all of the following:

(a) To support the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state.

(b) To maintain the respect due to the courts of justice and judicial officers.

(c) To counsel or maintain those actions, proceedings, or defenses only as appear to him or her legal or just, except the defense of a person charged with a public offense.

(d) To employ, for the purpose of maintaining the causes confided to him or her those means only as are consistent with truth, and never to seek to mislead the judge or any judicial officer by an artifice or false statement of fact or law.

(e) (1) To maintain inviolate the confidence, and at every peril to himself or herself to preserve the secrets, of his or her client.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), an attorney may, but is not required to, reveal confidential information relating to the representation of a client to the extent that the attorney reasonably

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believes the disclosure is necessary to prevent a criminal act that the attorney reasonably believes is likely to result in death of, or substantial bodily harm to, an individual.

(f) To advance no fact prejudicial to the honor or reputation of a party or witness, unless required by the justice of the cause with which he or she is charged.

(g) Not to encourage either the commencement or the continuance of an action or proceeding from any corrupt motive of passion or interest.

(h) Never to reject, for any consideration personal to himself or herself, the cause of the defenseless or the oppressed.

(i) To cooperate and participate in any disciplinary investigation or other regulatory or disciplinary proceeding pending against himself or herself. However, this subdivision shall not be construed to deprive an attorney of any privilege guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, or any other constitutional or statutory privileges. This subdivision shall not be construed to require an attorney to cooperate with a request that requires him or her to waive any constitutional or statutory privilege or to comply with a request for information or other matters within an unreasonable period of time in light of the time constraints of the attorney's practice. Any exercise by an attorney of any constitutional or statutory privilege shall not be used against the attorney in a regulatory or disciplinary proceeding against him or her.

(j) To comply with the requirements of Section 6002.1.

(k) To comply with all conditions attached to any disciplinary probation, including a probation imposed with the concurrence of the attorney.

(l) To keep all agreements made in lieu of disciplinary prosecution with the State Bar.

(m) To respond promptly to reasonable status inquiries of clients and to keep clients reasonably informed of significant developments in matters with regard to which the attorney has agreed to provide legal services.

(n) To provide copies to the client of certain documents under time limits and as prescribed in a rule of professional conduct which the board shall adopt.

(o) To report to the State Bar, in writing, within 30 days of the time the attorney has knowledge of any of the following:

(1) The filing of three or more lawsuits in a 12-month period against the attorney for malpractice or other wrongful conduct committed in a professional capacity.

(2) The entry of judgment against the attorney in a civil action for fraud, misrepresentation, breach of fiduciary duty, or gross negligence committed in a professional capacity.

(3) The imposition of judicial sanctions against the attorney, except for sanctions for failure to make discovery or monetary sanctions of less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

(4) The bringing of an indictment or information charging a felony against the attorney.

(5) The conviction of the attorney, including any verdict of guilty, or plea of guilty or no contest, of a felony, or a misdemeanor committed in the course of the practice of law, or in a manner in which a client of the attorney was the victim, or a necessary element of which, as determined by the statutory or common law definition of the misdemeanor, involves improper conduct of an attorney, including dishonesty or other moral turpitude, or an attempt or a conspiracy or solicitation of another to commit a felony or a misdemeanor of that type.

(6) The imposition of discipline against the attorney by a professional or occupational disciplinary agency or licensing board, whether in California or elsewhere.

(7) Reversal of judgment in a proceeding based in whole or in part upon misconduct, grossly incompetent representation, or willful misrepresentation by an attorney.

(8) As used in this subdivision, "against the attorney" includes claims and proceedings against any firm of attorneys for the practice of law in which the attorney was a partner at the time of the conduct complained of and any law corporation in which the attorney was a shareholder at the time of the conduct complained of unless the matter has to the attorney's knowledge already been reported by the law firm or corporation.

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(9) The State Bar may develop a prescribed form for the making of reports required by this section, usage of which it may require by rule or regulation.

(10) This subdivision is only intended to provide that the failure to report as required herein may serve as a basis of discipline. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 282. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 1986, ch. 475; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 1990, ch. 1639; Stats. 1999, ch. 221; Stats. 1999, ch. 342; Stats. 2001, ch. 24; Stats. 2003, ch. 765, operative July 1, 2004; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6068.11** (Added by Stats. 2000, ch. 472. Repealed by Stats. 2001, ch. 438.)

### **§ 6069 Authorization for Disclosure of Financial Records; Subpoena; Notice; Review**

(a) Every licensee of the State Bar shall be deemed by operation of this law to have irrevocably authorized the disclosure to the State Bar and the Supreme Court pursuant to Section 7473 of the Government Code of any and all financial records held by financial institutions as defined in subdivisions (a) and (b) of Section 7465 of the Government Code pertaining to accounts which the licensee must maintain in accordance with the Rules of Professional Conduct; provided that no such financial records shall be disclosed to the State Bar without a subpoena therefor having been issued pursuant to Section 6049 of this code, and further provided that the board of trustees shall by rule provide notice to the licensee similar to that notice provided for in subdivision (d) of Section 7473 of the Government Code. Such notice may be sent by mail addressed to the licensee's current office or other address for State Bar purposes as shown on the licensee's registration records of the State Bar.

The State Bar shall, by mail addressed to the licensee's current office or other address for State Bar purposes as shown on the licensee's registration records of the State Bar, notify its licensees annually of the provisions of this subdivision.

(b) With regard to the examination of all financial records other than those mentioned in subdivision (a), held by financial institutions as defined in subdivisions (a) and (b) of Section 7465 of the Government Code, no such financial records shall be disclosed to the State Bar without a subpoena therefor having been issued pursuant to Section 6049 of this code and the board of trustees shall by rule provide for service of a copy of the

subpoena on the customer as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 7465 of the Government Code and an opportunity for the customer to move the board or committee having jurisdiction to quash the subpoena prior to examination of the financial records. Review of the actions of the board or any committee on such motions shall be had only by the Supreme Court in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the court. Service of a copy of any subpoena issued pursuant to this subdivision (b) may be made on a licensee of the State Bar by mail addressed to the licensee's current office or other address for State Bar purposes as shown on the licensee's registration records of the State Bar. If the customer is other than a licensee, service shall be made pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 413.10) of Title 5 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure, except that service may be made by an employee of the State Bar.

(c) For purposes of this section, "licensee of the State Bar" or "licensee" means every licensee of the State Bar, law firm in California of which a licensee of the State Bar is a licensee, and law corporation within the meaning of Article 10 of Chapter 4 of Division 3 of this code. (Added by Stats. 1976, ch. 1320; Amended by Stats. 1978, ch. 1346; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6069.5** (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 422. Repealed by Stats. 2021, ch. 723.)

## **ARTICLE 4.5 MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION**

### **§ 6070 Establishment and Administration; Adoption of Rule by Supreme Court**

(a) The State Bar shall request the California Supreme Court to adopt a rule of court authorizing the State Bar to establish and administer a mandatory continuing legal education program. The rule that the State Bar requests the Supreme Court to adopt shall require that, within designated 36-month periods, all active licensees of the State Bar shall complete at least 25 hours of legal education activities approved by the State Bar or offered by a State Bar-approved provider, with four of those hours in legal ethics. The legal education activities shall focus on California law and practice and federal law as relevant to its practice in California or tribal law. A licensee of the State Bar who fails to satisfy the

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mandatory continuing legal education requirements of the program authorized by the Supreme Court rule shall be enrolled as an inactive licensee pursuant to rules adopted by the Board of Trustees of the State Bar.

(b) For purposes of this section, statewide associations of public agencies and incorporated, nonprofit professional associations of attorneys, including the California Lawyers Association, shall be certified as State Bar approved providers upon completion of an appropriate application process to be established by the State Bar. The certification may be revoked only by majority vote of the board, after notice and hearing, and for good cause shown. Programs provided by the California District Attorneys Association or the California Public Defenders Association, or both, including, but not limited to, programs provided pursuant to Title 1.5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 4 of the Penal Code, are deemed to be legal education activities approved by the State Bar or offered by a State Bar-approved provider.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (a), officers and elected officials of the State of California, and full-time professors at law schools accredited by the State Bar of California, the American Bar Association, or both, shall be exempt from the provisions of this section. Full-time employees of the State of California, acting within the scope of their employment, shall be exempt from the provisions of this section. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the State of California, or any political subdivision thereof, from establishing or maintaining its own continuing education requirements for its employees.

(d) The California Lawyers Association shall provide and encourage the development of low-cost programs and materials by which licensees of the State Bar may satisfy their continuing education requirements. Special emphasis shall be placed upon the use of internet capabilities and computer technology in the development and provision of no-cost and low-cost programs and materials. Towards this purpose, as a condition of the State Bar's collection of membership fees on behalf of the California Lawyers Association pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 6031.5, the California Lawyers Association shall ensure that any licensee possessing or having access to the Internet or specified generally available computer technology shall be capable of satisfying the full self-study portion of his or her MCLE requirement at a cost of twenty dollars (\$20) per hour or less. (Added by Stats. 1989, ch. 1425.

Amended by Stats. 1999, ch. 342; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

*[Publisher's Note: The following paragraph concerns mandatory continuing legal education and was added by Stats. 1999, ch. 342, but not codified. It is provided below for your information. See also, Appendix C for MCLE Rules and additional information regarding MCLE requirement.]*

SEC. 10. The Legislature finds and declares that it is in the public interest to continue the mandatory continuing legal education requirements for attorneys licensed to practice law. The Legislature further finds and declares that officers and elected officials of the State of California, and their full-time employees undergo ongoing continuing legal education in their review of the implementation of current statutes and regulations, including any court interpretation of a statute or regulation, and in their consideration and analysis of proposed changes in those statutes and regulations, thereby warranting their exemption from the requirements of Section 6070 of the Business and Professions Code. The Legislature also finds and declares that full-time law professors at accredited law schools also undergo ongoing continuing legal education in their review of the statutes and regulations of this state, including any court interpretation of a statute or regulation, thereby warranting their exemption from the requirements of Section 6070 of the Business and Professions Code.

### **§ 6070.1 Full-time Employees of the State of California—Definition**

(a) For the purpose of subdivision (c) of Section 6070, "full-time employees of the State of California" shall include all licensees of the State Bar employed by the California State Legislature, regardless of the licensee's official position classification.

(b) This section is declaratory of existing law. (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6070.5 Mandatory Continuing Education Curriculum; Training on Implicit Bias**

(a) The State Bar shall adopt regulations to require, as of January 1, 2022, that the mandatory continuing legal education (MCLE) curriculum for all licensees under this chapter includes training on implicit bias and the promotion of bias-reducing strategies to address how

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unintended biases regarding race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics undermine confidence in the legal system. A licensee shall meet the requirements of this section for each MCLE compliance period ending after January 31, 2022.

(b) When approving MCLE providers to offer the training required by subdivision (a), the State Bar shall require that the MCLE provider meets, at a minimum, all of the following requirements:

(1) The MCLE provider shall make reasonable efforts to recruit and hire trainers who are representative of the diversity of persons that California's legal system serves.

(2) The trainers shall have either academic training in implicit bias or experience educating legal professionals about implicit bias and its effects on people accessing and interacting with the legal system.

(3) The training shall include a component regarding the impact of implicit bias, explicit bias, and systemic bias on the legal system and the effect this can have on people accessing and interacting with the legal system.

(4) The training shall include actionable steps licensees can take to recognize and address their own implicit biases.

(c) As part of the certification, approval, or renewal process for MCLE-approved provider status, or more frequently if required by the State Bar, the MCLE provider shall attest to its compliance with the requirements of subdivision (b) and shall confirm that it will continue to comply with those requirements for the duration of the provider's approval period. (Added by Stats. 2019, ch. 418. Amended by Stats. 2020, ch. 36.)

### **§ 6071      Legal Education in Remedies Available for Civil Rights Violations; Amendment of Rule by Supreme Court**

(a) The State Bar shall request the California Supreme Court to amend Rule 9.31 of the California Rules of Court, relating to the mandatory continuing education program, to provide that one hour of the mandatory eight hours of legal education activities in legal ethics or law practice management, instead, may be satisfied by

one hour of legal education activity in the civil and criminal remedies available for civil rights violations.

(b) This section shall not affect the requirement that all active licensees of the State Bar complete at least four hours of legal education activity in ethics within designated 36-month periods. (Added by Stats. 1991, ch. 607. Amended by Stats. 2007, ch. 474; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

## **ARTICLE 4.7 CONTRACTS FOR LEGAL SERVICES**

### **§ 6072      Pro Bono Legal Services Certification; Failure to Comply, Considerations; Definitions**

(a) A contract with the state for legal services that exceeds fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) shall include a certification by the contracting law firm that the firm agrees to make a good faith effort to provide, during the duration of the contract, a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services, or an equivalent amount of financial contributions to qualified legal services projects and support centers, as defined in Section 6213, during each year of the contract equal to the lesser of either (1) 30 multiplied by the number of full-time attorneys in the firm's offices in the state, with the number of hours prorated on an actual day basis for any contract period of less than a full year or (2) 10 percent of its contract with the state. "Ten percent of the contract" shall mean the number of hours equal to 10 percent of the contract amount divided by the average billing rate of the firm.

(b) Failure to make a good faith effort may be cause for nonrenewal of a state contract for legal services and may be taken into account when determining the award of future contracts with the state for legal services. If a firm fails to provide the hours of pro bono legal services set forth in its certification, the following factors shall be considered in determining whether the firm made a good faith effort:

(1) The actual number of hours of pro bono legal services or the amount of financial contributions provided by the firm during the term of the contract.

(2) The firm's efforts to obtain pro bono legal work from legal services programs, pro bono

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programs, and other relevant communities or groups.

(3) The firm's history of providing pro bono legal services or financial contributions, or other activities of the firm that evidence a good faith effort to provide pro bono legal services or financial contributions, such as the adoption of a pro bono policy or the creation of a pro bono committee.

(4) The types of pro bono legal services provided, including the quantity and complexity of cases as well as the nature of the relief sought.

(5) The extent to which the failure to provide the hours of pro bono legal services or financial contributions set forth in the certification is the result of extenuating circumstances unforeseen at the time of the certification.

(c) In awarding a contract with the state for legal services that exceeds fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), the awarding department shall consider the efforts of a potential contracting law firm to provide, during the 12-month period prior to award of the contract, the minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services described in subdivision (a). Other things being equal, the awarding department shall award a contract for legal services to firms that have provided, during the 12-month period prior to award of the contract, the minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services described in subdivision (a).

(d) As used in this section, "pro bono legal services" means the provision of legal services either:

- (1) Without fee or expectation of fee to either:
  - (A) Persons who are indigent or of limited means.
  - (B) Charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, and educational organizations in matters designed primarily to address the economic, health, and social needs of persons who are indigent or of limited means.
- (2) At no fee or substantially reduced fee to groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights.

(e) Nothing in this section shall subject a contracting law firm that fails to provide the minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services described in subdivision (a) to civil or criminal liability, nor shall that failure be grounds for invalidating an existing contract for legal services.

(f) This article shall not apply to state contracts with, or appointments made by the judiciary of, an attorney, law firm, or organization for the purposes of providing legal representation to low- or middle-income persons, in either civil, criminal, or administrative matters.

(g) This article shall not apply to contracts entered into between the state and an attorney or law firm if the legal services contracted for are to be performed outside the State of California.

(h) The provisions of this article shall become operative on January 1, 2003. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 880, operative on January 1, 2003. Amended by Stats. 2002, ch. 137; Stats. 2012, ch. 758.)

***[Publisher's Note: The following paragraphs concern pro bono legal services as a professional responsibility and were added by Stats. 2001, ch. 880, but not codified. They are provided below for your information.]***

SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The provision of pro bono legal services is the professional responsibility of California attorneys as an integral part of the privilege of practicing law in this state.

(b) Each year, thousands of Californians, particularly those of limited means, must rely on pro bono legal services in order to exercise their fundamental right of access to justice in California. Without access to pro bono services, many Californians would be precluded from pursuing important legal rights and protections.

(c) In recent years, many law firms in California have been fortunate to experience a robust increase in average attorney income. However, during the same time period, there has regrettably been a decline in the average number of pro bono services being rendered by attorneys in this state.

(d) Without legislative action to bolster pro bono activities, there is a serious risk that the provision of

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critical pro bono legal services will continue to substantially decrease.

SECTION 2. It is the intent of the Legislature to do the following:

(a) To reaffirm the importance and integral public function of California attorneys and law firms striving to provide reasonable levels of pro bono legal services to Californians who need those services.

(b) To strengthen the state's resolve to ensure that all Californians, especially those of limited means, have an effective means to exercise their fundamental right of access to the courts.

### ARTICLE 4.8 PRO BONO SERVICES

#### § 6073 Pro Bono Services—Fulfillment of Commitment by Financial Support to Organizations Providing Free Legal Services

It has been the tradition of those learned in the law and licensed to practice law in this state to provide voluntary pro bono legal services to those who cannot afford the help of a lawyer. Every lawyer authorized and privileged to practice law in California is expected to make a contribution. In some circumstances, it may not be feasible for a lawyer to directly provide pro bono services. In those circumstances, a lawyer may instead fulfill his or her individual pro bono ethical commitment, in part, by providing financial support to organizations providing free legal services to persons of limited means. In deciding to provide that financial support, the lawyer should, at minimum, approximate the value of the hours of pro bono legal service that he or she would otherwise have provided. In some circumstances, pro bono contributions may be measured collectively, as by a firm's aggregate pro bono activities or financial contributions. Lawyers also make invaluable contributions through their other voluntary public service activities that increase access to justice or improve the law and the legal system. In view of their expertise in areas that critically affect the lives and well-being of members of the public, lawyers are uniquely situated to provide invaluable assistance in order to benefit those who might otherwise be unable to assert or protect their interests, and to support those legal organizations that advance these

goals. (Added by Stats. 2007, ch. 474. Amended by Stats. 2008, ch. 179.)

#### § 6073.1 Legal Aid Organizations, Persons of Limited Means, Pro Bono, and Reduced Fee Legal Services—Definitions

For purposes of this article, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Legal aid organization" has the meaning provided in Section 6159.51.

(b) "Person of limited means" means an individual qualified as "low-income," "very low income," or "extremely low income" under the current Department of Housing and Community Development's Official State Income Limits as set forth on the State of California's internet website.

(c) (1) "Pro bono legal services" means providing or enabling the direct delivery of legal services without expectation of compensation from the client other than reimbursement of expenses to any of the following:

(A) An indigent person, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 6213.

(B) A charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, or educational organization in matters that are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means.

(C) A charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, or educational organization in matters in furtherance of its organizational purposes.

(2) "Pro bono legal services" does not include legal services written off as bad debts.

(d) "Reduced fee legal services" means providing or enabling direct delivery of legal services at a substantially reduced rate affordable to persons of limited means to either:

(1) A person of limited means.

(2) A person or organization identified in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c). (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 719.)

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### § 6073.2 Pro Bono Reporting Requirements

(a) Pursuant to Section 6073, every lawyer should aspire to fulfill their individual commitment to provide pro bono legal services each year and contribute financially to California legal aid organizations.

(b) An active licensee shall report whether they have provided pro bono legal services through the licensee's My State Bar online profile on the State Bar's internet website through a provided section where those hours shall be declared when payment of annual fees is due. Every licensee shall report both of the following:

(1) Amount of pro bono legal services hours performed during the calendar year preceding the year in which the annual fee is due.

(2) Hours of reduced fee legal services performed for a low-income individual, nonprofit organization, or public law library established under Section 6360 during the calendar year preceding the date the annual report is due.

(c) (c) The State Bar may include, as part of the reporting requirement under subdivision (b), options for active licensees who do not track their pro bono hours or reduced fee legal services hours or who decline to answer, to indicate that status when prompted to report.

(d) The reporting requirement in subdivision (b) does not apply if a licensee is any of the following:

(1) Is employed by an organization primarily engaged in the provision of pro bono legal services, including qualified legal services projects and qualified support centers, as defined in Section 6213, legal aid organizations, and nonprofit public benefit corporations, as authorized by Section 13406 of the Corporations Code.

(2) A full-time employee or an officer or elected official of the State of California, or political subdivision thereof, or the federal government.

(3) Is prohibited by their current employer from performing pro bono legal services if the licensee declares this prohibition on their My State Bar online profile on the State Bar's internet website through a provided section when payment of annual fees is due.

(e) The State Bar shall retain and maintain the information reported pursuant to subdivision (b) for purposes of historical record for at least five years.

(f) (1) The information reported pursuant to subdivision (b) shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed as a public record pursuant to the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the State Bar may publish aggregated and anonymized reports based on the information received pursuant to subdivision (b).

(g) Failure of a licensee of the State Bar to comply with any of the provisions of this section is not grounds for disciplinary or administrative recourse.

(h) The State Bar shall not use any moneys received from the annual license fees collected pursuant to Section 6140 or 6141 for any costs associated with this section. (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 719.)

### § 6074 Pro Bono Civil Legal Assistance to Veterans and Their Families

(a) The Legislature finds that securing civil legal assistance is difficult for veterans, service members, and their families who cannot afford legal services, for reasons unique to their military or veteran status. The Legislature further finds that the State Bar is uniquely suited to bring together organizations to help coordinate the delivery of civil legal services for veterans and service members and their families.

(b) The State Bar shall engage with local bar associations, legal aid organizations, veterans service providers, military service providers, and volunteer attorneys and encourage those groups to provide legal services to veterans and service members and their families who otherwise cannot afford legal services and collaborate, as appropriate, to improve access to and delivery of these services throughout the state.

(c) The State Bar shall provide resources and educational materials to attorneys and the public in order to support the purposes of this section by, among other things, doing the following:

(1) Compiling a list of local bar associations, legal aid organizations, veterans service providers, military service providers, and volunteer attorneys willing to provide pro bono legal services to veterans and service members, organized by city and county, and posting the list on its internet website.

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(2) Conducting a statewide survey of programs that provide civil legal assistance to veterans in order to identify whether and where there is a need for legal advice clinics, publishing a report and recommendations based upon its findings no later than December 31, 2018, and posting the report on its internet website. (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 401. Amended by Stats. 2019, ch. 303.)

### ARTICLE 5 DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

#### **§ 6075 Method as Alternative and Cumulative**

In their relation to the provisions of Article 6, concerning the disciplinary authority of the courts, the provisions of this article provide a complete alternative and cumulative method of hearing and determining accusations against licensees of the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### **§ 6076 Rules of Professional Conduct; Formulation**

With the approval of the Supreme Court, the Board of Trustees may formulate and enforce rules of professional conduct for all licensees of the State Bar. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 25. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6076.5** (Added by Stats. 1977, ch. 478. Repealed by Stats. 2019, ch. 698.)

#### **§ 6077 Rules of Professional Conduct—Sanctions for their Violation**

The rules of professional conduct adopted by the board, when approved by the Supreme Court, are binding upon all licensees of the State Bar.

For a willful breach of any of these rules, the State Bar Court has power to discipline attorneys by reproof, public or private, or to recommend to the Supreme Court the suspension from practice for a period not exceeding three years of licensees of the State Bar.

(Origin: State Bar Act, § 29. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1957, ch. 1249; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2019, ch. 698.)

#### **§ 6077.5 Attorney Collection Agencies**

An attorney and his or her employees who are employed primarily to assist in the collection of a consumer debt owed to another, as defined by Section 1788.2 of the Civil Code, shall comply with all of the following:

(a) The obligations imposed on debt collectors pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with Section 1788.10) of Title 1.6C of Part 4 of Division 3 of the Civil Code.

(b) Any employee of an attorney who is not a licensee of the State Bar of California, when communicating with a consumer debtor or with any person other than the debtor concerning a consumer debt, shall identify himself or herself, by whom he or she is employed, and his or her title or job capacity.

(c) Without the prior consent of the debtor given directly to the attorney or his or her employee or the express permission of a court of competent jurisdiction, an attorney or his or her employee shall not communicate with a debtor in connection with the collection of any debt at any unusual time or place, or time or place known, or which should be known, to be inconvenient to the debtor. In the absence of knowledge of circumstances to the contrary, an attorney or his or her employee shall assume that the convenient time for communicating with the debtor is after 8 a.m. and before 9 p.m., local time at the consumer's location.

(d) If a debtor notifies an attorney or his or her employee in writing that the debtor refuses to pay a debt or that the debtor wishes the attorney or his or her employee to cease further communications with the debtor, the attorney or his or her employee shall not communicate further with the debtor with respect to such debt, except as follows:

(1) To advise the debtor that the attorney or his or her employee's further efforts are being terminated.

(2) To notify the debtor that the attorney or his or her employee or creditor may invoke specific remedies which are ordinarily invoked by such attorney or creditor.

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(3) Where applicable, to notify the debtor that the attorney or creditor intends to invoke his or her specific remedy.

(4) Where a suit has been filed or is about to be filed and the debtor is not represented by counsel or has appeared in the action on the debt in propria persona.

For the purpose of this section, "debtor" includes the debtor's spouse, parent, or guardian, if the debtor is a minor, executor, or administrator.

(e) An attorney or his or her employee shall not take or threaten to take any nonjudicial action to effect disposition or disablement of property if (1) there is no present right to possession of the property claimed as collateral through an enforceable security interest; (2) there is no present intention to take possession of the property; or (3) the property is exempt by law from that disposition or disablement.

(f) An attorney or his or her employee shall not cause charges to be made to any person for communications, by concealment of the true purposes of the communication. The charges include, but are not limited to, collect telephone calls and telegram fees.

(g) Within five days after the initial communication with a debtor in connection with the collection of any unsecured debt, an attorney or his or her employee shall, unless the following information is contained in the initial communication or the debtor has paid the debt, send the debtor a written notice containing the following:

- (1) The amount of the debt.
- (2) The name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed.
- (3) A statement that unless the debtor, within 30 days receipt of the notice, disputes the validity of the debt or any portion thereof, the debt will be assumed to be valid by the attorney or his or her employee.
- (4) A statement that if the debtor notifies the debt collector in writing within the 30-day period that the debt, or any portion thereof, is disputed, the attorney or his or her employee will obtain a writing, if any exists, evidencing the debt or a copy of the judgment against the debtor and a copy of

such writing or judgment will be mailed to the debtor by the attorney or his or her employee.

(5) A statement that, upon the debtor's written request within the 30-day period, the attorney or his or her employee will provide the debtor the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor.

If the debtor notifies the attorney or his or her employee in writing within the 30-day period described in this section that the debt or any portion thereof is disputed, or that the debtor requests the name and address of the original creditor, the attorney and his or her employee shall cease collection of the debt or any disputed portion thereof, except for filing suit thereon, until the attorney obtains a writing, if any exists, evidencing the debt or a copy of a judgment or the name and address of the original creditor, and a copy of such writing or judgment or the name and address of the original creditor is mailed to the debtor by the attorney or his or her employee.

(h) If any debtor owes multiple debts and makes any single payment to any attorney or his or her employee with respect to the debts, the attorney may not apply such payment to any debt which is disputed by the debtor and, where applicable, shall apply such payment in accordance with the debtor's directions.

(i) A willful breach of this section constitutes cause for the imposition of discipline of the attorney in accordance with Section 6077. (Added by Stats. 1984, ch. 118. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6078 Power to Discipline and Reinstate

After a hearing for any of the causes set forth in the laws of the State of California warranting disbarment, suspension, or other discipline, the State Bar Court has the power to recommend to the Supreme Court the disbarment or suspension from practice of licensees or to discipline them by reproof, public or private, without such recommendation.

The State Bar Court may pass upon all petitions for reinstatement. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 26. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6079** (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1114. Repealed by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159.)

**§ 6079.1 State Bar Court Hearing Judges**

(a) The Supreme Court shall appoint a presiding judge of the State Bar Court. In addition, five hearing judges shall be appointed, two by the Supreme Court, one by the Governor, one by the Senate Committee on Rules, and one by the Speaker of the Assembly, to efficiently decide any and all regulatory matters pending before the Hearing Department of the State Bar Court. The presiding judge and all other judges of that department shall be appointed for a term of six years and may be reappointed for additional six-year terms. Any judge appointed under this section shall be subject to admonition, censure, removal, or retirement by the Supreme Court upon the same grounds as provided for judges of courts of record of this state.

(b) Judges of the State Bar Court appointed under this section shall not engage in the private practice of law. The State Bar Court shall be broadly representative of the ethnic, sexual, and racial diversity of the population of California and composed in accordance with Sections 11140 and 11141 of the Government Code. Each judge:

- (1) Shall have been a licensee of the State Bar for at least five years.
- (2) Shall not have any record of the imposition of discipline as an attorney in California or any other jurisdiction.
- (3) Shall meet any other requirements as may be established by subdivision (d) of Section 12011.5 of the Government Code.

(c) Applicants for appointment or reappointment as a State Bar Court judge shall be screened by an applicant evaluation committee as directed by the Supreme Court. The committee, appointed by the Supreme Court, shall submit evaluations and recommendations to the appointing authority and the Supreme Court as provided in Rule 9.11 of the California Rules of Court, or as otherwise directed by the Supreme Court. The committee shall submit no fewer than three recommendations for each available position.

(d) (1) For judges appointed pursuant to this section or Section 6086.65, the board shall fix and pay reasonable compensation and expenses and provide adequate supporting staff and facilities. Hearing judges shall be paid the salary of a superior court judge. The presiding judge shall be paid the same salary as a justice of the court of appeal.

(2) Any compensation increase for State Bar Court judges on or after January 1, 2025, that is attributable to increases in the salary of a superior court judge or a justice of the court of appeal shall only be funded by license fees up to the amount of the increase that would have occurred in the absence of the changes to this subdivision made by the act adding this subdivision.

(e) From among the licensees of the State Bar or retired judges, the Supreme Court or the board may appoint pro tempore judges to decide matters in the Hearing Department of the State Bar Court when a judge of the State Bar Court is unavailable to serve without undue delay to the proceeding. Subject to modification by the Supreme Court, the board may set the qualifications, terms, and conditions of service for pro tempore judges and may, in its discretion, compensate some or all of them out of funds appropriated by the board for this purpose.

(f) A judge or pro tempore judge appointed under this section shall hear every regulatory matter pending in the Hearing Department of the State Bar Court as to which the taking of testimony or offering of evidence at trial has not commenced, and when so assigned, shall sit as the sole adjudicator, except for rulings that are to be made by the presiding judge of the State Bar Court or referees of other departments of the State Bar Court.

(g) Any judge or pro tempore judge of the State Bar Court as well as any employee of the State Bar assigned to the State Bar Court shall have the same immunity that attaches to judges in judicial proceedings in this state. Nothing in this subdivision limits or alters the immunities accorded the State Bar, its officers and employees, or any judge or referee of the State Bar Court as they existed prior to January 1, 1989. This subdivision does not constitute a change in, but is cumulative with, existing law.

(h) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the board from appointing persons to serve without compensation to arbitrate fee disputes under Article 13 (commencing with Section 6200) or to monitor the probation of a licensee of the State Bar, whether those appointed under Section 6079, as added by Chapter 1114 of the Statutes of 1986, serve in the State Bar Court or otherwise. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 221. Amended by Stats. 2000, ch. 246; Stat. 2002, ch. 784; Stats. 2007, ch. 474; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

**§ 6079.4 Privilege; Exercise of Not Deemed Failure to Cooperate**

The exercise by an attorney of his or her privilege under the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, or of any other constitutional or statutory privileges shall not be deemed a failure to cooperate within the meaning of subdivision (i) of Section 6068. (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639.)

**§ 6079.5 Chief Trial Counsel; Appointment; Term; Qualifications**

(a) The board shall appoint a lawyer admitted to practice in California to serve as chief trial counsel. He or she shall be appointed for a term of four years and may be reappointed for additional four-year periods. He or she shall serve at the pleasure of the board. He or she shall not engage in private practice. The State Bar shall notify the Senate Committee on Rules and the Senate and Assembly Committees on Judiciary within seven days of the dismissal or hiring of a chief trial counsel.

The appointment of the chief trial counsel is subject to confirmation by the Senate, and the time limits prescribed in Section 1774 of the Government Code for Senate confirmation and for service in office are applicable to the appointment.

He or she shall report to and serve under the Regulation, Admissions, and Discipline Oversight Committee of the Board of Trustees of the State Bar or its successor committee on attorney discipline, and shall not serve under the direction of the chief executive officer.

(b) The chief trial counsel shall have the following qualifications:

- (1) Be an attorney licensed to practice in the State of California, be in good standing and shall not have committed any disciplinary offenses in California or any other jurisdiction.
- (2) Have a minimum of five years of experience in the practice of law, including trial experience, with law practice in broad areas of the law.
- (3) Have a minimum of two years of prosecutorial experience or similar experience in administrative agency proceedings or disciplinary agencies.
- (4) Have a minimum of two years of experience in an administrative role, overseeing staff functions.

The board may except an appointee from any of the above qualifications for good cause upon a determination of necessity to obtain the most qualified person.

On or after July 1, 1987, the chief trial counsel may, as prescribed by the Supreme Court, petition the court for a different disposition of a matter than the recommendations of the review department or the board to the court. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1114. Amended by Stats. 2002, ch. 415, effective September 9, 2002; Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

**§ 6080 Records**

The State Bar Court shall keep a record of all State Bar Court disciplinary proceedings. In all disciplinary proceedings resulting in a recommendation to the Supreme Court for disbarment or suspension, the State Bar Court shall keep a transcript of the evidence and proceedings therein and shall make findings of fact thereon. The State Bar Court shall render a decision to be recorded in its minutes. In disciplinary proceedings in which no discipline has been imposed, the records thereof may be destroyed after five years. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 26. Amended by Stats. 1965, ch. 920; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6081 Report to Supreme Court**

Upon the making of any decision recommending the disbarment or suspension from practice of any licensee of the State Bar, the State Bar Court shall immediately file a certified copy of the decision, together with the transcript and the findings, with the Clerk/Executive Officer of the Supreme Court. Upon enrolling a licensee as an inactive licensee pursuant to Section 6007 of this code, or upon terminating or refusing to terminate such enrollment pursuant to such section the State Bar Court shall immediately give appropriate written notice to the licensee and to the Clerk/Executive Officer of the Supreme Court. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 26. Amended by Stats. 1957, ch. 737; Stats. 2017, ch. 36; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6081.1 Transcription of Oral Testimony**

Nothing in Sections 6080 and 6081 shall require the State Bar Court to transcribe oral testimony unless ordered by the Supreme Court or requested by a party at the party's expense. (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159.)

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### § 6082 Review by Supreme Court

Any person complained against and any person whose reinstatement the State Bar Court may refuse to recommend may have the action of the State Bar Court reviewed by the California Supreme Court in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the California Supreme Court. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 38. Amended by Stats. 1988, ch. 1217; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6083 Petition to Review; Burden of Proof

(a) A petition to review or to reverse or modify any decision recommending the disbarment or suspension from practice of a licensee of the State Bar may be filed with the Supreme Court by the licensee within 60 days after the filing of the decision recommending such discipline.

(b) A petition to review or to reverse or modify any decision reproving a licensee of the State Bar, or any action enrolling the licensee as an inactive licensee pursuant to Section 6007 of this code, or refusing to restore the inactive licensee to an active license, pursuant to such section may be filed with the Supreme Court by the licensee within 60 days after service upon him or her of notice of such decision or action.

(c) Upon such review the burden is upon the petitioner to show wherein the decision or action is erroneous or unlawful. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 26. Amended by Stats. 1957, ch. 737; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6084 Order by Supreme Court

(a) When no petition to review or to reverse or modify has been filed by either party within the time allowed therefor, or the petition has been denied, the decision or order of the State Bar Court shall be final and enforceable. In any case in which a petition to review or to reverse or modify is filed by either party within the time allowed therefor, the Supreme Court shall make such order as it may deem proper in the circumstances. Nothing in this subdivision abrogates the Supreme Court's authority, on its own motion, to review de novo the decision or order of the State Bar Court.

(b) Notice of such order shall be given to the licensee and to the State Bar.

(c) A petition for rehearing may be filed within the time generally provided for petitions for rehearing in civil cases.

(d) For willful failure to comply with a disciplinary order or an order of the Supreme Court, or any part thereof, a licensee may be held in contempt of court. The contempt action may be brought by the State Bar in any of the following courts:

(1) In the Los Angeles or San Francisco Superior Court.

(2) In the superior court of the county of the licensee's address as shown on current State Bar licensing records.

(3) In the superior court of the county where the act or acts occurred.

(4) In the superior court of the county in which the licensee's regular business address is located.

Changes of venue may be requested pursuant to the applicable provisions of Title 4 (commencing with Section 392) of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 26. Amended by Stats. 1957, ch. 737; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6085 Rights of Person Complained Against

Any person complained against shall be given fair, adequate and reasonable notice and have a fair, adequate and reasonable opportunity and right:

(a) To defend against the charge by the introduction of evidence.

(b) To receive any and all exculpatory evidence from the State Bar after the initiation of a disciplinary proceeding in State Bar Court, and thereafter when this evidence is discovered and available. This subdivision shall not require the disclosure of mitigating evidence.

(c) To be represented by counsel.

(d) To examine and cross-examine witnesses.

(e) To exercise any right guaranteed by the California Constitution or the United States Constitution, including the right against self-incrimination.

He or she shall also have the right to the issuance of subpoenas for attendance of witnesses to appear and

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testify or produce books and papers, as provided in this chapter. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 35. Amended by Stats. 1994, ch. 190; Stats. 1999, ch. 221.)

### § 6085.5 Disciplinary Charges; Pleas to Allegations

There are three kinds of pleas to the allegations of a notice of disciplinary charges or other pleading which initiates a disciplinary proceeding against a licensee:

- (a) Admission of culpability.
- (b) Denial of culpability.
- (c) Nolo contendere, subject to the approval of the State Bar Court. The court shall ascertain whether the licensee completely understands that a plea of nolo contendere shall be considered the same as an admission of culpability and that, upon a plea of nolo contendere, the court shall find the licensee culpable. The legal effect of such a plea shall be the same as that of an admission of culpability for all purposes, except that the plea and any admissions required by the court during any inquiry it makes as to the voluntariness of, or the factual basis for, the pleas, may not be used against the licensee as an admission in any civil suit based upon or growing out of the act upon which the disciplinary proceeding is based. (Added by Stats. 1996, ch. 1104. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6086 Procedure

The board of trustees, subject to the provisions of this chapter, may by rule provide the mode of procedure in all cases of complaints against licensees. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 37. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### § 6086.1 Disciplinary Proceeding Hearings and Records Shall be Public

- (a) (1) Subject to subdivision (b), and except as otherwise provided by law, hearings and records of original disciplinary proceedings in the State Bar Court shall be public, following the filing of a notice of disciplinary charges.
- (2) Subject to subdivision (b), and except as otherwise provided by law, hearings and records of the following matters shall be public:

(A) Filings for involuntary inactive enrollment or restriction under subdivision (a), (c), (d), or (e) of Section 6007.

(B) Petitions for reinstatement under Section 6078.

(C) Proceedings for suspension or disbarment under Section 6101 or 6102.

(D) Payment information from the Client Security Fund pursuant to Section 6140.5.

(E) Actions to cease a law practice or assume a law practice under Section 6180 or 6190.

(b) All disciplinary investigations are confidential until the time that formal charges are filed and all investigations of matters identified in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) are confidential until the formal proceeding identified in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) is instituted. These investigations shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code). This confidentiality requirement may be waived under any of the following exceptions:

(1) The licensee whose conduct is being investigated or has been investigated consents to a public announcement or disclosure.

(2) (A) The Chief Trial Counsel, with the written concurrence of the chair of the board, may waive confidentiality, but only if both of the following are met:

(i) Disclosure is warranted for protection of the public and the provisions of subdivision (c) are inadequate for the protection of the public.

(ii) It is determined that disclosure is necessary to prevent an immediate harm to the public, including, but not limited to, ongoing fraud, theft, or embezzlement.

(B) Under the circumstances in this paragraph, after private notice to the licensee, the Chief Trial Counsel or chair of the board may issue, if appropriate, one or more

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public announcements or make information public generally or to specified individuals or entities. Any disclosure made under this paragraph shall include a statement defending the right of the licensee to a fair hearing and shall be limited to doing some or all of the following:

(i) Confirming the fact of an investigation or proceeding.

(ii) Providing a brief factual summary to identify the subject matter of the investigation or proceeding.

(iii) Providing the status of the investigation or proceeding.

(C) If the Chief Trial Counsel or chair of the board for any reason self-disqualifies from acting under this paragraph or is otherwise unavailable to act under this paragraph, the Chief Trial Counsel or chair of the board shall designate someone to act on their behalf.

(3) The Chief Trial Counsel or Chief Trial Counsel's designee may waive confidentiality pursuant to Section 6044.5.

(c) (1) Notwithstanding the confidentiality of investigations, the board may vote to waive confidentiality, but only when warranted for protection of the public. The board shall hold a meeting under this subdivision in closed session.

(A) The board shall provide a licensee whose confidential information is being considered for disclosure five days' notice of the fact that the board will be meeting to consider waiving confidentiality and that the licensee may, in advance of the meeting, submit a written statement to the board for the board's consideration at the meeting. The licensee shall not be permitted to attend the closed session meeting of the board.

(B) When assessing whether to waive confidentiality and to what extent the board shall, at a minimum:

(i) Apply a presumption in favor of maintaining confidentiality.

(ii) Consider the extent to which the allegations or issues involved in the investigation are generally known to the public.

(iii) Consider the gravity of the underlying allegation and potential for continued harm to the public.

(iv) Consider the potential for harm to the reputation of the licensee.

(C) All materials for the board's consideration pursuant to this subdivision, including the written statement from the licensee, shall be confidential and not disclosed as a public record under the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(2) If the board votes to waive confidentiality pursuant to paragraph (1) and only after complying with the requirements in paragraph (3), the Chief Trial Counsel or chair of the board may issue, if appropriate, one or more public announcements or make information public generally or to specified individuals or entities. Any disclosure under this paragraph shall include a statement defending the right of the licensee to a fair hearing and shall be limited to doing some or all of the following:

(A) Confirming the fact of an investigation or proceeding.

(B) Providing a brief factual summary to identify the subject matter of the investigation or proceeding.

(C) Providing the status of the investigation or proceeding.

(3) Before making any public announcements pursuant to paragraph (2), the State Bar shall provide notice to the licensee via email at the address shown on the licensee's registration records of the State Bar and via United States mail to the physical address shown on the licensee's registration records of all of the following:

(A) The fact that the board has voted to waive confidentiality.

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(B) A description of the information that may be disclosed to the public.

(C) That the licensee has five business days from the date of the notice to notify the State Bar that they are contesting the release of the information.

(d) (1) A licensee may file a motion with the State Bar Court to prevent the State Bar from disclosing information pursuant to subdivision (c). The motion shall be filed within seven court days from the date of the notice issued to the licensee under paragraph (3) of subdivision (c).

(2) If a licensee files a motion under paragraph (1) the proceeding shall be afforded priority on the State Bar Court calendar, and the court shall issue a ruling within 10 court days from the filing of the motion.

(3) The State Bar shall adopt procedures to enact the provisions of this subdivision via the rulemaking process.

(4) All hearings on motions pursuant to this subdivision shall be confidential.

(e) Notwithstanding the confidentiality of investigations, the State Bar shall disclose to any member of the public so inquiring, any information reasonably available to it pursuant to subdivision (o) of Section 6068, and to Sections 6086.7, 6086.8, and 6101, concerning a licensee of the State Bar that is otherwise a matter of public record, including civil or criminal filings and dispositions. (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 163. Amended by Stats. 1992, ch. 1265; Stats. 2015, ch. 537; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **§ 6086.2 State Bar Records**

All State Bar records pertaining to admissions, licensing, and the administration of the program authorized by Article 14 of this chapter shall be available to the Office of Trial Counsel and the Office of Investigations for use in the investigation and prosecution of complaints against licensees of the State Bar, except to the extent that disclosure is prohibited by law. (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6086.20 Private Reprovals; Recommendations for Codifying a Formal Disciplinary Diversion Program**

(a) Commencing January 1, 2025, the Chief Trial Counsel shall not issue private reprovals to any attorney accused of misconduct.

(b) On or before April 1, 2024, the board, in consultation with the Chief Trial Counsel, shall provide to the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees recommendations for codifying a formal disciplinary diversion program for attorneys accused of minor violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct. (Added by Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **§ 6086.5 State Bar Court; Establishment; Powers; Rules**

(a) The board of trustees shall establish a State Bar Court, to act in its place and stead in the determination of disciplinary and reinstatement proceedings and proceedings pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of Section 6007 to the extent provided by rules adopted by the board of trustees pursuant to this chapter. In these proceedings the State Bar Court may exercise the powers and authority vested in the board of trustees by this chapter, including those powers and that authority vested in committees of, or established by, the board, except as limited by rules of the board of trustees within the scope of this chapter.

(b) Access to records of the State Bar Court shall be governed by court rules and laws applicable to records of the judiciary and not the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(c) For the purposes of Sections 6007, 6050, 6052, and 6077 (excluding the first sentence), "board" includes the State Bar Court.

(d) (1) Nothing in this section shall authorize the State Bar Court to adopt rules of professional conduct or rules of procedure.

(2) The Executive Committee of the State Bar Court may adopt rules of practice for the conduct of all proceedings within its jurisdiction. These rules may not conflict with the rules of procedure adopted by the board, unless approved by the Supreme Court. (Added by Stats. 1965, ch. 973. Amended by Stats. 1977, ch. 58; Stats. 1985, ch.

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453; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2021, ch. 615; Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

**§ 6086.6** (Added by Stats. 1975, ch. 874. Repealed by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159.)

### **§ 6086.65 State Bar Court Review Department**

(a) There is a Review Department of the State Bar Court, that consists of the Presiding Judge of the State Bar Court and two Review Department judges appointed by the Supreme Court. The judges of the Review Department shall be nominated, appointed, and subject to discipline as provided by subdivision (a) of Section 6079.1, shall be qualified as provided by subdivision (b) of Section 6079.1, and shall be compensated as provided for the presiding judge by subdivision (d) of Section 6079.1. However, the two Review Department judges may be appointed to, and paid as, positions occupying one-half the time and pay of the presiding judge. Candidates shall be rated and screened pursuant to Rule 9.11 of the California Rules of Court or as otherwise directed by the Supreme Court.

(b) The Presiding Judge of the State Bar Court shall appoint an Executive Committee of the State Bar Court of no fewer than seven persons, including one person who has never been a licensee of the State Bar or admitted to practice law before any court in the United States. The Executive Committee may adopt rules of practice for the operation of the State Bar Court as provided in Section 6086.5.

(c) Any decision or order reviewable by the Review Department and issued by a judge of the State Bar Court appointed pursuant to Section 6079.1 may be reviewed only upon timely request of a party to the proceeding and not on the Review Department's own motion. The standard to be applied by the Review Department in reviewing a decision, order, or ruling by a hearing judge fully disposing of a proceeding is established in Rule 9.12 of the California Rules of Court, or as otherwise directed by the Supreme Court. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 221. Amended by Stats. 2000, ch. 246; Stats. 2007, ch. 474; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6086.7 Court Notification to State Bar for Misconduct, Misrepresentation, Incompetent Representation and Imposition of Sanctions**

(a) A court shall notify the State Bar of any of the following:

(1) A final order of contempt imposed against an attorney that may involve grounds warranting discipline under this chapter. The court entering the final order shall transmit to the State Bar a copy of the relevant minutes, final order, and transcript, if one exists.

(2) Whenever a modification or reversal of a judgment in a judicial proceeding is based in whole or in part on the misconduct, incompetent representation, or willful misrepresentation of an attorney.

(3) The imposition of any judicial sanctions against an attorney, except sanctions for failure to make discovery or monetary sanctions of less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

(4) The imposition of any civil penalty upon an attorney pursuant to Section 8620 of the Family Code.

(5) A violation described in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 1424.5 of the Penal Code by a prosecuting attorney, if the court finds that the prosecuting attorney acted in bad faith and the impact of the violation contributed to a guilty verdict, guilty or nolo contendere plea, or, if identified before conclusion of trial, seriously limited the ability of a defendant to present a defense.

(b) In the event of a notification made under subdivision (a) the court shall also notify the attorney involved that the matter has been referred to the State Bar.

(c) The State Bar shall investigate any matter reported under this section as to the appropriateness of initiating disciplinary action against the attorney. (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 483. Amended by Stats. 2003, ch. 469; Stats. 2015, ch. 467.)

**§ 6086.8 Reporting Requirements—Court, Insurers and Attorneys**

(a) Within 20 days after a judgment by a court of this state that a licensee of the State Bar of California is liable for any damages resulting in a judgment against the attorney in any civil action for fraud, misrepresentation, breach of fiduciary duty, or gross negligence committed in a professional capacity, the court which rendered the judgment shall report that fact in writing to the State Bar of California.

(b) Every claim or action for damages against a licensee of the State Bar of California for fraud, misrepresentation, breach of fiduciary duty, or negligence committed in a professional capacity shall be reported to the State Bar of California within 30 days of receipt by the admitted insurer or licensed surplus brokers providing professional liability insurance to that licensee of the State Bar.

(c) An attorney who does not possess professional liability insurance shall send a complete written report to the State Bar as to any settlement, judgment, or arbitration award described in subdivision (b), in the manner specified in that subdivision. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475. Amended by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6086.9** (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1114. Repealed by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159.)

**§ 6086.10 Payment of Cost of Disciplinary Proceedings**

(a) Any order imposing a public reproof on a licensee of the State Bar shall include a direction that the licensee shall pay costs. In any order imposing discipline, or accepting a resignation with a disciplinary matter pending, the Supreme Court shall include a direction that the licensee shall pay costs. An order imposing costs pursuant to this subdivision is enforceable both as provided in Section 6140.7 and as a money judgment. The State Bar may collect these costs through any means provided by law.

(b) The costs required to be imposed pursuant to this section include all of the following:

- (1) The actual expense incurred by the State Bar for the original and copies of any reporter's

transcript of the State Bar proceedings, and any fee paid for the services of the reporter.

(2) All expenses paid by the State Bar which would qualify as taxable costs recoverable in civil proceedings.

(3) The charges determined by the State Bar to be "reasonable costs" of investigation, hearing, and review. These amounts shall serve to defray the costs, other than fees for the services of attorneys or experts, of the State Bar in the preparation or hearing of disciplinary proceedings, and costs incurred in the administrative processing of the disciplinary proceeding and in the administration of the Client Security Fund.

(c) A licensee may be granted relief, in whole or in part, from an order assessing costs under this section, or may be granted an extension of time to pay these costs, in the discretion of the State Bar, upon grounds of hardship, special circumstances, or other good cause.

(d) If an attorney is exonerated of all charges following a formal hearing, the attorney is entitled to reimbursement from the State Bar in an amount determined by the State Bar to be the reasonable expenses, other than fees for attorneys or experts, of preparation for the hearing.

(e) In addition to other monetary sanctions as may be ordered by the Supreme Court pursuant to Section 6086.13, costs imposed pursuant to this section are penalties, payable to and for the benefit of the State Bar of California, a public corporation created pursuant to Article VI of the California Constitution, to promote rehabilitation and to protect the public. This subdivision is declaratory of existing law. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 662. Amended by Stats. 2003, ch. 334; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2020, ch. 360.)

**§ 6086.11** (Added by Stats. 1995, ch. 88. Repealed by Stats. 1995, ch. 88.)

**§ 6086.12** (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159. Repealed by Stats. 2004, ch. 193.)

**§ 6086.13 Imposition of Monetary Sanction in Disciplinary Matter**

(a) Any order of the Supreme Court imposing suspension or disbarment of a licensee of the State Bar, or accepting a resignation with a disciplinary matter pending may include an order that the licensee pay a monetary sanction not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each violation, subject to a total limit of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000).

(b) Monetary sanctions collected under subdivision (a) shall be deposited into the Client Security Fund.

(c) The State Bar shall, with the approval of the Supreme Court, adopt rules setting forth guidelines for the imposition and collection of monetary sanctions under this section.

(d) The authority granted under this section is in addition to the provisions of Section 6086.10 and any other authority to impose costs or monetary sanctions.

(e) Monetary sanctions imposed under this section shall not be collected to the extent that the collection would impair the collection of criminal penalties or civil judgments arising out of transactions connected with the discipline of the attorney. In the event monetary sanctions are collected under this section and criminal penalties or civil judgments arising out of transactions connected with the discipline of the attorney are otherwise uncollectible, those penalties or judgments may be reimbursed from the Client Security Fund to the extent of the monetary sanctions collected under this section. (Added by Stats. 1992, ch. 1270. Amended by Stats. 1993, ch. 926; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6086.14 Alternative Dispute Resolution Discipline Mediation Program—Formulation and Administration**

(a) The Board of Trustees of the State Bar is authorized to formulate and adopt rules and regulations necessary to establish an alternative dispute resolution discipline mediation program to resolve complaints against attorneys that do not warrant the institution of formal investigation or prosecution. The program should identify sources of client dissatisfaction and provide a mediation process to resolve those complaints or disputes unless the client objects to mediation. The refusal of an attorney to participate in the State Bar's alternative dispute resolution discipline mediation program established pursuant to this section, or the

failure of an attorney to comply with any agreement reached in the State Bar's alternative dispute resolution discipline mediation program may subject that attorney to discipline. The rules may authorize discipline mediation under this article to proceed under discipline mediation programs sponsored by local bar associations in this state. The rules shall authorize a local bar association to charge a reasonable administrative fee for the purpose of offsetting the costs of maintaining the discipline mediation programs.

(b) The board of trustees shall have the authority to formulate and adopt standards and guidelines to implement the alternative dispute resolution discipline mediation program. The standards and guidelines formulated and adopted by the board, as from time to time amended, shall be effective and binding on all licensees, and may encompass any discipline mediation programs sponsored by local bar associations.

(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that the authorization of an alternative dispute resolution discipline mediation program not be construed as limiting or altering the powers of the Supreme Court of this state or the State Bar to disbar or discipline licensees of the State Bar. The records relating to the alternative dispute resolution discipline mediation program may be made available in any subsequent disciplinary action pursuant to any rule, standard, or guideline adopted by the Board of Trustees of the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 982. Amended by Stats. 1994, ch. 479; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6086.15 State Bar Annual Discipline Report to Legislature**

(a) The State Bar shall issue an Annual Discipline Report by November 30 of each year describing the performance and condition of the State Bar discipline system, including all matters that affect public protection. Except as set forth in subdivision (d), the report shall cover the period from July 1 of the previous calendar year to June 30 of the year in which the report is issued and shall include accurate and complete descriptions of all of the following:

- (1) The inventory of cases within the Office of Chief Trial Counsel which were open at the start of the reporting period, were opened during the reporting period, remain pending with the office at the close of the reporting period, or were disposed of during the reporting period by closure, by filing

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of a stipulation with the State Bar Court, by filing of a notice of disciplinary charges with the State Bar Court, or by transmittal of a criminal conviction to the State Bar Court. The State Bar shall also report on its success in meeting the case processing goals set forth in Section 6094.5, including, but not limited to, tables showing the number and percentage of cases meeting each goal, the number and percentage of those cases not disposed of within the case processing goals, and a high-level explanation of the reasons for failing to meet those case processing goals. The inventory of cases shall not be limited to case types that could result in the filing of a notice of disciplinary charges in the State Bar Court, but shall also include Nonattorney Unauthorized Practice of Law (NA-UPL), Section 6007 matters, moral character matters, resignations with charges pending, and mini-reinstatements.

(2) The number of inquiries and complaints and their disposition.

(3) The number, average pending times, and types of matters self-reported by licensees of the State Bar pursuant to subdivision (o) of Section 6068 and subdivision (c) of Section 6086.8.

(4) The number, average pending times, and types of matters reported by other sources pursuant to Sections 6086.7, 6086.8, 6091.1, subdivisions (b) and (c) of Section 6101, and Section 6175.6.

(5) The speed of complaint handling and dispositions by type, measured by the median and the average processing times.

(6) The number, average pending times, and types of filed notices of disciplinary charges and formal disciplinary outcomes.

(7) The number, average pending times, and types of other matters, including petitions to terminate practice pursuant to Section 6180 or 6190, interim suspensions and license restrictions pursuant to Section 6007, motions to enforce a binding arbitration award, judgment, or agreement pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 6203, motions to revoke probation, letters of warning, private reproofs, admonitions, and agreements in lieu of discipline.

(8) The number, average pending times, and outcomes of complaints involving a State Bar licensee who has been disbarred or who has resigned, and is engaged in the unauthorized practice of law, including referrals to district attorneys, city attorneys, or other prosecuting authorities, or petitions to terminate practice pursuant to Section 6180.

(9) The number, average pending times, and outcomes of complaints against nonattorneys engaged in the unauthorized practice of law, including referrals to district attorneys, city attorneys, or other prosecuting authorities; petitions to terminate practice pursuant to Section 6126.3; or referrals to prosecuting authorities or actions by the State Bar pursuant to Section 6126.7.

(10) A description of the condition of the Client Security Fund, including an accounting of payouts.

(11) An accounting of the cost of the discipline system by function.

(12) Compliance with the requirement of Section 6101 to transmit, within 30 days of receipt, the record of any criminal conviction which involves or may involve moral turpitude to the Supreme Court, or to close the matter if transmittal to the Supreme Court is not appropriate.

(b) The Annual Discipline Report shall include statistical information presented in a consistent manner for year-to-year comparison.

(c) The Annual Discipline Report shall be presented to the Chief Justice of California, to the Governor, to the Speaker of the Assembly, to the President pro Tempore of the Senate, and to the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees, for their consideration and shall be considered a public document.

(d) (1) All data relating to the items set forth in subdivision (a) shall also be reported, if available, for the preceding five years. Data from 2020 and prior years shall be reported for the calendar year. Except as specified in paragraph (2), data from 2021 and future years shall be reported based on the state fiscal year.

(2) The Annual Discipline Report due on October 31, 2022, shall include data from both the prior state fiscal year and the prior calendar year. (Added by Stats. 1992, ch. 1265. Amended by Stats. 1994,

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ch. 146 (previously § 6086.13). Amended by Stats. 1995, ch. 88; Stats. 2001, ch. 745; Stats. 2015, ch. 537; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2021, ch. 723; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **§ 6086.16 Report on the Status of Regulatory and Disciplinary Efforts Concerning Alleged Abuses**

The State Bar shall report to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary by January 1, 2005, on the status of its regulatory and disciplinary efforts concerning alleged abuses by private actions brought on behalf of the general public pursuant to Section 17204 of the Unfair Practices Act (Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 17000) of Division 6). (Added by Stats. 2003, ch. 334.)

### **6087 Effect of Chapter on Powers of Supreme Court**

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as limiting or altering the powers of the Supreme Court of this State to disbar or discipline licensees of the bar as this power existed prior to the enactment of Chapter 34 of the Statutes of 1927, relating to the State Bar of California.

Notwithstanding any other law, the Supreme Court may by rule authorize the State Bar to take any action otherwise reserved to the Supreme Court in any matter arising under this chapter or initiated by the Supreme Court; provided, that any such action by the State Bar shall be reviewable by the Supreme Court pursuant to such rules as the Supreme Court may prescribe. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 26. Amended by Stats. 1951, ch. 177; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6088 Provision for Rules**

The board may provide by rule that alleged facts in a proceeding are admitted upon failure to answer, failure to appear at formal hearing, or failure to deny matters specified in a request for admissions; the party in whose favor the facts are admitted shall not be required to otherwise prove any facts so admitted. However, the rules shall provide a fair opportunity for the party against whom facts are admitted to be relieved of the admission upon a satisfactory showing, made within 30 days of notice that facts are admitted, that (a) the admissions were the result of mistake or excusable neglect, and (b) the admitted facts are actually denied by the party. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1114.)

**§ 6089** (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1114. Repealed by Stats. 1990, ch. 483.)

## **ARTICLE 5.5 MISCELLANEOUS DISCIPLINARY PROVISIONS**

**§ 6090** (Added by 1986, ch. 475. Repealed by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6090.5 Attorney/Client Agreement Not to File Complaint—Cause for Discipline**

(a) It is cause for suspension, disbarment, or other discipline for any licensee, whether acting on their own behalf or on behalf of someone else, whether or not in the context of litigation to solicit, agree, or seek agreement, that:

(1) Misconduct or the terms of a settlement of a claim for misconduct shall not be reported to the State Bar.

(2) A complainant shall withdraw a disciplinary complaint or shall not cooperate with the investigation or prosecution conducted by the State Bar.

(3) The record of any action or proceeding shall be sealed from review by the State Bar.

(b) This section applies to all agreements or attempts to seek agreements, irrespective of the commencement or settlement of a civil action. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475. Amended by Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2020, ch. 360.)

### **§ 6090.6 State Bar Access to Nonpublic Court Records**

In a disciplinary proceeding, the State Bar shall have access, on an ex parte basis, to all nonpublic court records relevant to the competence or performance of its licensees, provided that these records shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code). This access, for investigation and enforcement purposes, shall not be limited by any court order sealing those records, except a court order authorized by Section

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851.6, 851.7, 851.8, or 851.85 of the Penal Code. The State Bar may disclose publicly the nature and content of those records, including sealed records other than those specified immediately above in this section, after notice of intention to disclose all or a part of the records has been given to the parties in the underlying action. A party to the underlying action who would be adversely affected by the disclosure may serve notice on the State Bar within 10 days of receipt of the notice of intention to disclose the records that it opposes the disclosure and will seek a hearing in the court of competent jurisdiction on an expedited basis. (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159. Amended by Stats. 2015, ch. 537; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2021, ch. 615.)

### **§ 6090.8 Duty to Disclose Certain Licensee Information; Complaint to State Bar**

(a) (1) A licensee of the State Bar who knows that another licensee has conspired to engage in or has engaged in any of the following shall inform the State Bar:

(A) Seditious conspiracy as prohibited under Section 2384 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

(B) Treason as prohibited under Section 37 of the Penal Code or Section 2381 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

(C) Rebellion or insurrection as prohibited under Section 2383 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

(2) For the purpose of this subdivision, “knows” means actual knowledge of the fact in question. A licensee’s knowledge may be inferred from circumstances.

(b) This section does not require disclosure of information otherwise protected by the attorney-client privilege or information gained by a licensee while participating in the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program.

(c) A licensee of the State Bar who makes a complaint to the State Bar pursuant to subdivision (a) with the intent to intimidate, harass, or otherwise deter a fellow licensee from engaging in the lawful practice of law shall be deemed to have committed professional misconduct.

(d) The board may amend the Rules of Professional Conduct, and shall propose those amendments to the Supreme Court for approval, to implement this section. (Added by Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **§ 6091 Trust Fund Accounts—State Bar Investigation/ Audit**

If a client files a complaint with the State Bar alleging that his or her trust fund is being mishandled, the State Bar shall investigate and may require an audit if it determines that circumstances warrant.

At the client’s written request, the attorney shall furnish the client with a complete statement of the funds received and disbursed and any charges upon the trust account, within 10 calendar days after receipt of the request. Such requests may not be made more often than once each 30 days unless a client files a complaint with the State Bar and the State Bar determines that more statements are warranted. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475.)

### **§ 6091.1 Client Trust Fund Accounts—Investigation of Overdrafts and Misappropriations**

(a) The Legislature finds that overdrafts and misappropriations from attorney trust accounts are serious problems, and determines that it is in the public interest to ensure prompt detection and investigation of instances involving overdrafts and misappropriations from attorney trust accounts.

A financial institution, including any branch, which is a depository for attorney trust accounts under subdivision (a) or (b) of Section 6211, shall report to the State Bar in the event any properly payable instrument is presented against an attorney trust account containing insufficient funds, irrespective of whether or not the instrument is honored.

(b) All reports made by the financial institution shall be in the following format:

(1) In the case of a dishonored instrument, the report shall be identical to the overdraft notice customarily forwarded to the depositor, and shall include a copy of the dishonored instrument, if such a copy is normally provided to depositors.

(2) In the case of instruments that are presented against insufficient funds but which instruments are

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honored, the report shall identify the financial institution, the attorney or law firm, the account number, the date of presentation for payment, and the date paid, as well as the amount of overdraft created thereby. These reports shall be made simultaneously with, and within the time provided by law for notice of dishonor, if any. If an instrument presented against insufficient funds is honored, then the report shall be made within five banking days of the date of presentation for payment against insufficient funds.

(c) Every attorney practicing or admitted to practice in this state shall, as a condition thereof, be conclusively deemed to have consented to the reporting and production requirements of this section.

(d) Nothing in this section shall preclude a financial institution from charging an attorney or law firm for the reasonable cost of producing the reports and records required by subdivisions (a) and (b). (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159.)

### **§ 6091.2 Definitions Applicable to Section 6091.1**

As used in Section 6091.1:

(a) "Financial institution" means a bank, savings and loan, or other financial institution serving as a depository for attorney trust accounts under subdivision (a) or (b) of Section 6211.

(b) "Properly payable" means an instrument that, if presented in the normal course of business, is in a form requiring payment under the laws of this state.

(c) "Notice of dishonor" means the notice that a financial institution is required to give, under the laws of this state, upon presentation of an instrument that the institution dishonors. (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159. Amended by Stats. 2007, ch. 422.)

### **§ 6091.3 Client Trust Account Reporting and Oversight—Financial Institutions**

(a) Commencing January 1, 2026, upon the establishment of a new client trust account associated with an attorney licensed to practice in California, the financial institution shall collect and retain within its books and records an attorney's State Bar license number where the number is made available to the

financial institution by the attorney associated with the client trust account in the format described in subdivision (c).

(b) On or before March 1, 2026, and annually on or before March 1 thereafter, a financial institution shall electronically provide via secure file transport protocol or another format mutually acceptable to the financial institution and the State Bar, the following for every client trust account actually known to the financial institution associated with an attorney's State Bar license number:

(1) The name of the financial institution in which the client trust account is held.

(2) The name of the attorney or law firm associated with the client trust account.

(3) The account number of the client trust account.

(4) The attorney's State Bar license number associated with the trust account.

(5) The trust account balance as of December 31 of the previous year. If December 31 is a holiday, the account balance as of the preceding business day may be reported.

(c) On or before January 1, 2026, the State Bar shall create a standard form for use by an attorney licensed to practice in California wherein the attorney shall submit their State Bar license number and the name and account number of all applicable associated client trust accounts to a financial institution pursuant to subdivision (d).

(d) On or before July 1, 2026, the State Bar shall require an attorney licensed to practice in California to furnish their State Bar license number to the financial institution where the attorney associated with the client trust account maintains the account. If the client trust account is maintained by a law firm, the law firm shall designate one of its members to provide the member's State Bar license number. The attorney licensed to practice in California shall submit the completed form to satisfy the requirements in this subdivision to the financial institution pursuant to Section 684.115 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(e) A financial institution receiving a completed form containing a State Bar license number pursuant to subdivision (d) shall, in reliance on the license number,

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incorporate into its books and records the attorney's State Bar license number for known client trust accounts where the license number was previously not collected.

(f) This section is intended to supplement, and not eliminate nor replace, the remittance, reporting, and other obligations of a financial institution under Section 6212, which shall remain in full force and effect. This section does not affect the obligations of an attorney or a law firm relating to maintaining an interest-bearing IOLTA account under Section 6211, which shall remain in full force and effect.

(g) No action shall lie against a financial institution or any of its officers, directors, or employees relating to their discharge of, or their alleged failure to discharge, any obligation under this section.

(h) On or before November 30, 2026, and annually on or before November 30 thereafter, the State Bar shall submit to the Assembly Committee on Judiciary and the Senate Committee on Judiciary a report detailing the number of findings, mandatory corrective actions, and referrals for possible discipline that the State Bar made in the prior fiscal year pertaining to client trust accounts. The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code. (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6091.4 State Bar Access to Attorney Records for Compliance Reviews; Confidentiality of Information**

(a) Notwithstanding subdivision (e) of Section 6068, Article 3 (commencing with Section 950) of Chapter 4 of Division 8 of the Evidence Code, the Attorney Work Product doctrine as restated in Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 2018.010) of Title 4 of Part 4 of the Code of Civil Procedure, or any other law, licensees of the State Bar, limited liability partnerships, or law corporations registered with the State Bar shall, pursuant to a request made as part of a compliance review or investigative audit being conducted by or at the direction of the State Bar, provide to the State Bar or its agents all requested information, records, or communications, including, but not limited to, account journals, client ledgers, fee agreements, client files, and billing statements related to the receipt, holding, and disbursement of funds, securities, or other property in which the licensee, limited liability partnership, or law corporation knows or reasonably should know a client or other person has an interest.

(b) By providing any information, records, or communications under subdivision (a), an attorney does not violate, waive, or extinguish the duty to maintain the confidence and preserve the secrets of their client under subdivision (e) of Section 6068, the Lawyer-Client Privilege under Article 3 (commencing with Section 950) of Chapter 4 of Division 8 of the Evidence Code, the Attorney Work Product doctrine as restated in Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 2018.010) of Title 4 of Part 4 of the Code of Civil Procedure, or the protections of any other rule or law related to attorney work product or the attorney-client privilege.

(c) Any information, records, or communications provided under subdivision (a) shall remain confidential unless disclosure by the State Bar or its agents is required to fulfill its licensing, regulatory, and disciplinary functions, including, but not limited to, investigation or formal proceedings concerning alleged misconduct of a licensee, limited liability partnership, or law corporation or the disclosure of alleged misconduct under Section 6044.5. In no event shall disclosure by the State Bar or its agents be deemed a waiver of the confidential character of the information for any other purpose nor shall the disclosing licensee be considered in violation of any of the duties listed in subdivision (b) as related to the disclosure of such items by the State Bar or its agents.

(d) Any information, records, or communications provided under subdivision (a) shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code). (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6092 Attorney Competency—Study and Report to Legislature**

The State Bar may engage the services of consultants and an unpaid volunteer peer review committee and undertake any other steps that may be appropriate for devising methods for determining and improving attorney competence. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475. Amended by Stats. 1987, ch. 56; Stats. 2001, ch. 24; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6092.5 Duties of Disciplinary Agency**

In addition to any other duties specified by law, the State Bar shall do all of the following:

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- (a) Promptly notify the complainant of the disposition of each matter.
- (b) Notify all of the following of a lawyer's involuntary enrollment as an inactive licensee and termination of that enrollment, or any suspension or disbarment, and the reinstatement to active license of a suspended or disbarred attorney:
  - (1) The presiding judge of the superior court in the county where the attorney most recently maintained an office for the practice of law, with a request that the judge notify the judges in the county.
  - (2) The local bar association, if there is one, in the county or area where the attorney most recently maintained an office for the practice of law.
  - (3) The appropriate disciplinary authority in any other jurisdiction where the attorney is admitted to practice.
- (c) Upon receipt of the certified copy of the record of conviction of a lawyer, as provided by subdivision (c) of Section 6101, promptly forward a certified copy of the judgment of conviction to the disciplinary agency in each jurisdiction in which the lawyer is admitted.
- (d) Maintain permanent records of discipline and other matters within its jurisdiction, and compile statistics to aid in the administration of the system, including, but not limited to, a single log of all complaints received, investigative files, statistical summaries of docket processing and case dispositions, transcripts of all proceedings which have been transcribed, and other records as the State Bar or court require to be maintained.
- (e) Expunge records of the State Bar as directed by the California Supreme Court.
- (f) Pursuant to directions from the California Supreme Court, undertake whatever investigations are assigned to it.
- (g) Provide information to prospective complainants regarding the nature and procedures of the disciplinary system, the criteria for prosecution of disciplinary complaints, the client security fund, and fee arbitration procedures.

(h) Inform the public, local bar associations and other organizations, and any other interested parties about the work of the State Bar and the right of all persons to make a complaint.

(i) Make agreements with respondents in lieu of disciplinary proceedings, regarding conditions of practice, further legal education, or other matters. These agreements may be used by the State Bar in any subsequent proceeding involving the lawyer. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2023, ch. 478.)

### **§ 6093 Conditions of Probation**

(a) Whenever probation is imposed by the State Bar Court or by the Office of Trial Counsel with the agreement of the respondent, any conditions may be imposed which will reasonably serve the purposes of the probation.

(b) Violation of a condition of probation constitutes cause for revocation of any probation then pending, and may constitute cause for discipline.

(c) Proceedings to revoke probation shall be expedited. The standard of proof is the preponderance of the evidence. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475. Amended by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159.)

### **§ 6093.5 Notify Complainant of Status of Complaint**

Upon request, the State Bar shall notify a complainant of the status of his or her complaint and shall provide him or her with a written summary of any response by the attorney to his or her complaint if the response was the basis for dismissal of the complaint. A complainant shall be notified in writing of the disposition of his or her complaint, and of the reasons for the disposition.

Receipt of a written complaint shall be acknowledged by the State Bar within two weeks of its receipt.

A complainant may also designate another person as his or her agent to receive copies of the information to which he or she is entitled pursuant to this section. This is in addition to any designation by a complainant of one of his or her elected representatives to receive the information. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475. Amended by Stats. 1995, ch. 88; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### **§ 6094 Communications to Disciplinary Agency Privileged**

(a) Communications to the State Bar relating to lawyer misconduct or disability or competence, or any communication related to an investigation or proceeding and testimony given in the proceeding are privileged, and no lawsuit predicated thereon may be instituted against any person. The State Bar and officers and employees are subject to the rules governing liability of public entities, officers, and employees specified in Division 3.6 (commencing with Section 810) of Title 1 of the Government Code.

Nothing in this subdivision limits or alters the privileges accorded communications to the State Bar or testimony given in investigations or proceedings conducted by it or the immunities accorded complainants, informants, witnesses, the State Bar, its officers, and employees as existed prior to the enactment of this section. This subdivision does not constitute a change in, but is cumulative with the existing law.

(b) Upon application by the State Bar and notice to the appropriate prosecuting authority, the superior court may grant immunity from criminal prosecution to a witness in any State Bar proceeding. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### **§ 6094.5 Goals and Policy of Disciplinary Agency**

(a) It is the goal and policy of the State Bar to ensure that matters are handled competently, accurately, and timely. Until processing goals are established pursuant to subdivision (b) and codified in statute, the goal and policy of the State Bar is to dismiss a complaint, admonish the attorney, or have the Office of Chief Trial Counsel file formal charges within six months after it receives a complaint alleging attorney misconduct. As to complaints designated as complicated matters by the Chief Trial Counsel, it shall be the goal and policy of the State Bar to dismiss a complaint, admonish the attorney or have the Office of Chief Trial Counsel file formal charges within 12 months after it receives a complaint alleging attorney misconduct.

(b) No later than October 31, 2022, the State Bar shall propose case processing standards for competently, accurately, and timely resolving cases within the Office of Chief Trial Counsel.

(1) The case processing standards shall take into account all relevant factors, including, but not limited to, the mechanics of the discipline process, the risk to public protection, including multiple complaints against the same attorney, reasonable expectations of the public for resolution of complaints, and the complexity of cases. The case processing standards shall be based on and reflect all of the following:

(A) A review of case processing standards in attorney discipline systems in at least five other states, including large and small jurisdictions, with the goal of reviewing jurisdictions that have strong and effective discipline systems that protect the public.

(B) Consultation with state and national experts on attorney discipline.

(C) Reports from the Legislative Analyst's Office.

(D) Reports from the California State Auditor.

(2) The State Bar shall conduct an analysis of the data collected in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, of paragraph (1) and develop proposed case processing standards that reflect the goal of resolving attorney discipline cases in a timely, effective, and efficient manner while having small backlogs of attorney discipline cases and best protecting the public.

(3) Goals for case processing and disposition that are intended to encourage the prompt disposition of matters and apply to the overall inventory of matters of the type specified in subdivision (b) are not meant to create deadlines for individual cases, are not jurisdictional, and shall not serve as a bar or defense to any disciplinary investigation or proceeding.

(4) The analysis shall include staffing requirements for the Office of Chief Trial Counsel to achieve the case processing goals described in this paragraph.

(5) The State Bar shall provide its analysis and recommendations to the Legislative Analyst's Office for review. The Legislative Analyst's Office shall report to the Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committees on its review of the State Bar's

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proposal. The State Bar shall provide the Legislative Analyst's Office with any available information to assist the Legislative Analyst's Office in its review.

(6) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would codify in statute case processing goals for the State Bar's discipline system based on the State Bar's proposal and the Legislative Analyst's Office review of that proposal to improve the effectiveness of the State Bar's attorney discipline system, best protect the public, and remain in place for an extended period of time to allow for adequate oversight of the State Bar and its performance over time.

(c) The case processing goals described in subdivision (a) shall not apply to the following matters: Nonattorney Unauthorized Practice of Law (NA-UPL), Section 6007 matters, moral character matters, resignations with charges pending, mini-reinstatements, and criminal conviction matters.

(d) To ensure that criminal conviction matters are handled competently, accurately, and timely, the State Bar shall report on its compliance with the requirement of Section 6101 to transmit, within 30 days of receipt, the record of any conviction which involves or may involve moral turpitude to the Supreme Court with such other records and information as may be appropriate to establish the Supreme Court's jurisdiction.

(e) Consistent with Section 6026.11, a notice of disciplinary charges is a public record when filed.

(f) The State Bar, subject to its record retention policy, shall respond within a reasonable time to inquiries as to the status of pending disciplinary cases in which a notice to show cause has been filed, or as to public discipline that has been imposed upon an attorney in California, or to the extent known by the agency, elsewhere, and, to the extent such information is known to the agency, all criminal cases in which an indictment or information has been brought charging a felony against an attorney or an attorney has been convicted of a felony, or convicted of any misdemeanor committed in the course of the practice of law or in any manner such that a client of the attorney was the victim, or any felony or misdemeanor, a necessary element of which, as determined by the statutory or common law definition of the crime, involves improper conduct of an attorney, including interference with the

administration of justice, running and capping, false swearing, misrepresentation, fraud, deceit, bribery, extortion, misappropriation, theft, dishonesty or other moral turpitude, or an attempt of a conspiracy or solicitation of another to commit such a crime. Such information acquired from the State Bar under this section shall not be used by an attorney to solicit business. The State Bar shall adopt regulations to carry out the purposes of this subdivision. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475; Amended by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2001, ch. 745; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2021, ch. 723.)

### **§ 6095 Disciplinary Procedures—Public Hearings; Reports, Audits**

(a) The State Bar shall annually hold at least two public hearings, one in southern California and one in northern California, to hear proposals on bar disciplinary procedures, attorney competency, and admissions procedures.

(b) To the extent the information is known to the State Bar, it shall report annually to the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees concerning the judicial or disciplinary disposition of all criminal or disciplinary proceedings involving the allegation of the commission of a felony by an attorney. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475. Amended by Stats. 1995, ch. 88; Stats. 2004, ch. 193; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6095.1 Complaints Against Attorneys—Statistical Information; Reports to Legislative Committees; Equitable Use of Resources**

(a) Beginning on April 1, 2000, and through March 31, 2001, the State Bar shall compile statistics indicating the number of complaints against attorneys, broken down to reflect the percentage of complaints brought against attorneys practicing as solo practitioners, in small law firms or partnerships, and in large law firms. The State Bar shall also compile statistics indicating the percentage of complaints that are investigated, the percentage of complaints that are prosecuted, and the outcomes of those prosecutions against solo practitioners, attorneys practicing in small law firms or partnerships, and attorneys practicing in large law firms. For the purposes of the study, agreements in lieu of discipline shall not be counted as prosecutions. Practicing attorneys shall provide any information that is requested by the bar deemed necessary for the

purpose of compiling the statistics. For purposes of this section, "small law firm" means a firm, partnership, association, corporation, or limited liability partnership that includes 10 or fewer attorneys.

(b) On or before June 30, 2001, the State Bar shall issue a written report to the Senate Committee on Judiciary and the Assembly Committee on Judiciary on procedures used in the disciplinary process to ensure that resources of the State Bar are used fairly and equitably in the investigation and prosecution of complaints against attorneys. In particular, the report shall focus on whether disciplinary proceedings are brought in disproportionate numbers against attorneys practicing as solo practitioners or in small law firms or partnerships, as compared to proceedings brought against attorneys practicing in large law firms. The report shall also describe any procedures in place or under consideration to correct any institutional bias and shall include a discussion of, and recommendations regarding, any additional changes to the discipline process that would make it more equitable. In particular, the State Bar shall consider disciplinary avenues other than the investigation and prosecution of complaints against attorneys. After issuing the report, the State Bar shall continue to compile and maintain statistics pursuant to subdivision (a), and shall make those statistics available to the public upon request.

(c) Procedures used in the disciplinary process shall ensure that resources of the State Bar are used fairly and equitably in the investigation and prosecution of complaints against all attorneys. Disciplinary proceedings shall not be brought in disproportionate numbers against attorneys practicing as solo practitioners or in small law firms or partnerships, as compared to proceedings brought against attorneys practicing in large law firms, unless the number of complaints against solo practitioners, or attorneys practicing in small law firms or partnerships, is commensurate with the higher number of disciplinary proceedings.

(d) The report of the State Bar prepared pursuant to this section shall not be used as a defense or mitigating factor in any disciplinary proceeding against an attorney. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 221.)

## ARTICLE 6 DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY OF THE COURTS

### § 6100 Disbarment or Suspension

For any of the causes provided in this article, arising after an attorney's admission to practice, he or she may be disbarred or suspended by the Supreme Court. Nothing in this article limits the inherent power of the Supreme Court to discipline, including to summarily disbar, any attorney. (Origin: Code of Civ. Proc., § 287. Amended by Stats. 1951, ch. 177; Stats. 1985, ch. 453.)

### § 6101 Conviction of Crimes Involving Moral Turpitude

(a) Conviction of a felony or misdemeanor, involving moral turpitude, constitutes a cause for disbarment or suspension.

In any proceeding, whether under this article or otherwise, to disbar or suspend an attorney on account of that conviction, the record of conviction shall be conclusive evidence of guilt of the crime of which they have been convicted.

(b) The district attorney, city attorney, or other prosecuting agency shall notify the State Bar of California's Office of Chief Trial Counsel of the pendency of an action against an attorney charging a felony or misdemeanor immediately upon obtaining information that the defendant is an attorney. The notice shall identify the attorney and describe the crimes charged and the alleged facts. The prosecuting agency shall also notify the clerk of the court in which the action is pending that the defendant is an attorney, and the clerk shall record prominently in the file that the defendant is an attorney.

(c) The clerk of the court in which an attorney is convicted of a crime shall, within 48 hours after the conviction, transmit a certified copy of the record of conviction to the Office of Chief Trial Counsel. Within 30 days of receipt, the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel shall transmit the record of any conviction which involves or may involve moral turpitude to the Supreme Court with such other records and information as may be appropriate to establish the Supreme Court's jurisdiction. The Office of Chief Trial Counsel may procure and transmit the record of conviction to the Supreme Court when the clerk has not done so or when

the conviction was had in a court other than a court of this state.

(d) The proceedings to disbar or suspend an attorney on account of such a conviction shall be undertaken by the Supreme Court pursuant to the procedure provided in this section and Section 6102, upon the receipt of the certified copy of the record of conviction.

(e) A plea or verdict of guilty, an acceptance of a nolo contendere plea, or a conviction after a plea of nolo contendere is deemed to be a conviction within the meaning of those sections. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., §§ 287(1), 288, 289. Amended by Stats. 1953, ch. 44; Stats. 1955, ch. 1190; Stats. 1984, ch. 1355; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2019, ch. 698.)

**§ 6102 Conviction of Crime—Suspension and Disbarment Procedure**

(a) Upon the receipt of the certified copy of the record of conviction, if it appears therefrom that the crime of which the attorney was convicted involved, or that there is probable cause to believe that it involved, moral turpitude or is a felony under the laws of California, the United States, or any state or territory thereof, the Supreme Court shall suspend the attorney until the time for appeal has elapsed, if no appeal has been taken, or until the judgment of conviction has been affirmed on appeal, or has otherwise become final, and until the further order of the court. Upon its own motion or upon good cause shown, the court may decline to impose, or may set aside, the suspension when it appears to be in the interest of justice to do so, with due regard being given to maintaining the integrity of, and confidence in, the profession.

(b) For the purposes of this section, a crime is a felony under the law of California if it is declared to be so specifically or by subdivision (a) of Section 17 of the Penal Code, unless it is charged as a misdemeanor pursuant to paragraph (4) or (5) of subdivision (b) of Section 17 of the Penal Code, irrespective of whether in a particular case the crime may be considered a misdemeanor as a result of postconviction proceedings, including proceedings resulting in punishment or probation set forth in paragraph (1) or (3) of subdivision (b) of Section 17 of the Penal Code.

(c) After the judgment of conviction of an offense specified in subdivision (a) has become final or, irrespective of any subsequent order under Section 1203.4 of the Penal Code or similar statutory provision,

an order granting probation has been made suspending the imposition of sentence, the Supreme Court shall summarily disbar the attorney if the offense is a felony under the laws of California, the United States, or any state or territory thereof, and either: (1) an element of the offense is the specific intent to deceive, defraud, steal, or make or suborn a false statement, or involved moral turpitude, or (2) the facts and circumstances of the offense involved moral turpitude.

(d) For purposes of this section, a conviction under the laws of another state or territory of the United States shall be deemed a felony if both of the following apply:

(1) The judgment or conviction was entered as a felony irrespective of any subsequent order suspending sentence or granting probation and irrespective of whether the crime may be considered a misdemeanor as a result of postconviction proceedings.

(2) The elements of the offense for which the licensee was convicted would constitute a felony under the laws of the State of California at the time the offense was committed.

(e) Except as provided in subdivision (c), if after adequate notice and opportunity to be heard (which hearing shall not be had until the judgment of conviction has become final or, irrespective of any subsequent order under Section 1203.4 of the Penal Code, an order granting probation has been made suspending the imposition of sentence), the court finds that the crime of which the attorney was convicted, or the circumstances of its commission, involved moral turpitude, it shall enter an order disbarring the attorney or suspending them from practice for a limited time, according to the gravity of the crime and the circumstances of the case; otherwise it shall determine if the facts and circumstances surrounding the conviction involve other misconduct warranting discipline, and if so, impose the appropriate discipline. In determining the extent of the discipline to be imposed in a proceeding pursuant to this article, any prior discipline imposed upon the attorney may be considered.

(f) The court may refer the proceedings or any part thereof or issue therein, including the nature or extent of discipline, to the State Bar for hearing, report, and recommendation.

(g) The record of the proceedings resulting in the conviction, including a transcript of the testimony therein, may be received in evidence.

(h) The Supreme Court shall prescribe rules for the practice and procedure in proceedings conducted pursuant to this section and Section 6101.

(i) The other provisions of this article providing a procedure for the disbarment or suspension of an attorney do not apply to proceedings pursuant to this section and Section 6101, unless expressly made applicable. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 299. Amended by Stats. 1941, ch. 1183; Stats. 1955, ch. 1190; Stats. 1981, ch. 714; Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

**§ 6103        Sanctions for Violation of Oath or Attorney's Duties**

A willful disobedience or violation of an order of the court requiring him to do or forbear an act connected with or in the course of his profession, which he ought in good faith to do or forbear, and any violation of the oath taken by him, or of his duties as such attorney, constitute causes for disbarment or suspension. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 287(2). Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34.)

**§ 6103.5      Communicate Written Offer of Settlement to Client**

(a) A licensee of the State Bar shall promptly communicate to the licensee's client all amounts, terms, and conditions of any written offer of settlement made by or on behalf of an opposing party. As used in this section, "client" includes any person employing the licensee of the State Bar who possesses the authority to accept an offer of settlement, or in a class action, who is a representative of the class.

(b) Any written offer of settlement or any required communication of a settlement offer, as described in subdivision (a), shall be discoverable by either party in any action in which the existence or communication of the offer of settlement is an issue before the trier of fact. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1238. Amended by Stats. 1987, ch. 213; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6103.6      Violation of Probate Code Section 15687 or Part 3.5 of Division 11 of Probate Code—Grounds for Discipline**

Violation of Section 15687 of the Probate Code, or of Part 3.5 (commencing with Section 21350) or Part 3.7 (commencing with Section 21360) of Division 11 of the

Probate Code, shall be grounds for discipline, if the attorney knew or should have known of the facts leading to the violation. This section shall only apply to violations that occur on or after January 1, 1994. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 293. Amended by Stats. 1995, ch. 730; Stats. 2010, ch. 620.)

**§ 6103.7      Report of Suspected Immigration Status Cause for Discipline**

It is cause for suspension, disbarment, or other discipline for any licensee of the State Bar to report suspected immigration status or threaten to report suspected immigration status of a witness or party to a civil or administrative action or his or her family member to a federal, state, or local agency because the witness or party exercises or has exercised a right related to his or her employment or hiring of residential real property, broadly interpreted. As used in this section, "family member" means a spouse, parent, sibling, child, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, cousin, grandparent, or grandchild related by blood, adoption, marriage, or domestic partnership. (Added by Stats. 2013, ch. 577. Amended by Stats. 2017, ch. 489; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6104        Appearing for Party without Authority**

Corruptly or wilfully and without authority appearing as attorney for a party to an action or proceeding constitutes a cause for disbarment or suspension. (Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34.)

**§ 6105        Permitting Misuse of Name**

Lending his name to be used as attorney by another person who is not an attorney constitutes a cause for disbarment or suspension. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 287(4).)

**§ 6106        Moral Turpitude, Dishonesty or Corruption Irrespective of Criminal Conviction**

The commission of any act involving moral turpitude, dishonesty or corruption, whether the act is committed in the course of his relations as an attorney or otherwise, and whether the act is a felony or misdemeanor or not, constitutes a cause for disbarment or suspension.

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If the act constitutes a felony or misdemeanor, conviction thereof in a criminal proceeding is not a condition precedent to disbarment or suspension from practice therefor. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 287(5). Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34.)

### **§ 6106.1 Advocacy of Overthrow of Government**

Advocating the overthrow of the Government of the United States or of this State by force, violence, or other unconstitutional means, constitutes a cause for disbarment or suspension. (Added by Stats. 1951, ch. 179.)

### **§ 6106.2 Violation of Civil Code Section 55.3; Violation of Specified Provisions of Civil Code Section 55.31 or 55.32**

(a) It shall constitute cause for the imposition of discipline of an attorney within the meaning of this chapter for an attorney to engage in any conduct in violation of Section 55.3, subdivision (b) or (c) of Section 55.31, or paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) or subdivision (b) of Section 55.32 of the Civil Code.

(b) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2016. (Repealed and added by Stats. 2012, ch. 383, effective September 19, 2012. Section operative January 1, 2016, by its own provisions.)

### **§ 6106.3 Mortgage Loan Modifications: Violation of Civil Code Section 2944.6—Grounds for Discipline**

(a) It shall constitute cause for the imposition of discipline of an attorney within the meaning of this chapter for an attorney to engage in any conduct in violation of Section 2944.6 of the Civil Code.

(b) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2017. (Amended (as added by Stats. 2009, ch. 630 by Stats. 2012, ch. 563. Effective January 1, 2013. Section operative January 1, 2017, by its own provisions.)

*[Publisher's Note: The following paragraph concerns Business and Professions Code 6106.3 and was added by Stats. 2009, ch. 630, but not codified. It is provided below for your information.]*

SEC. 14. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are: With foreclosures at historic levels, foreclosure rescue scams are pervasive and rampant. In order to prevent financially stressed homeowners from being victimized and to provide them with needed protection at the earliest possible time, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.

### **§ 6106.4 Excluded Events Exempt from Attorney Discipline and Admission Denial**

(a) For purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) "Applicant" means an applicant for admission to practice law in this state.

(2) "Attorney" means an attorney admitted to practice law in this state.

(3) "Excluded event" means any of the following, when based on the application of another state's law that interferes with any person's right to receive, provide, recommend, enable, or advocate for sensitive services that would be lawful in this state, regardless of the location in which the event takes place and regardless of the location of the attorney or applicant:

(A) The entry of judgment against the attorney or applicant in a civil action.

(B) The imposition of judicial sanctions against an attorney or applicant.

(C) The bringing of an indictment or information charging a felony against the attorney or applicant, or the conviction of the attorney or applicant, including any verdict of guilty, or plea of guilty or no contest, of a felony, or a misdemeanor committed in the course of the practice of law.

(D) The imposition of discipline or a finding of professional misconduct against the attorney or applicant by a professional or

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occupational disciplinary agency or licensing board.

(4) "Sensitive services" has the same meaning as in Section 56.05 of the Civil Code.

(b) Notwithstanding Section 6049.1, 6101, 6102, 6103, or 6106, an excluded event shall not be grounds under this chapter for suspension, disbarment, or other disciplinary action, nor shall it require an attorney or applicant to report the excluded event to the State Bar, supply evidence that an attorney is culpable of professional misconduct in this state, nor serve as grounds to deny admission for any applicant for admission to practice law.

(c) This section does not apply to an event that would subject an attorney or applicant subject to this chapter to a similar claim, charge, or action under the laws of this state. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 137.)

### **§ 6106.5 Insurance Claims; Fraud**

It shall constitute cause for disbarment or suspension for an attorney to engage in any conduct prohibited under Section 1871.4 of the Insurance Code or Section 550 of the Penal Code. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 174, effective May 31, 1978. Amended by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 1991, ch. 116; Stats. 2000, ch. 867.)

### **§ 6106.6 Insurance Claims; Fraud; Investigation of Licensee**

The State Bar shall investigate any licensee against whom an information or indictment has been filed that alleges a violation of Section 550 of the Penal Code or Section 1871.4 of the Insurance Code, if the district attorney does not otherwise object to initiating an investigation. (Added by Stats. 2000, ch. 867.)

### **§ 6106.7 Professional Sports Service Contracts**

It shall constitute cause for the imposition of discipline of an attorney within the meaning of this chapter for an attorney to violate any provision of the Miller-Ayala Athlete Agents Act (Chapter 2.5 (commencing with Section 18895) of Division 8), or to violate any provision of Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 1500) of Part 6 of Division 2 of the Labor Code, prior to January 1, 1997, or to violate any provision of the law of any other

state regulating athlete agents. (Added by Stats. 1985, ch. 1133. Amended by Stats. 1996, ch. 858.)

### **§ 6106.8 Sexual Involvement Between Lawyers and Clients; Rule of Professional Conduct**

(a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that there is no rule that governs propriety of sexual relationships between lawyers and clients. The Legislature further finds and declares that it is difficult to separate sound judgment from emotion or bias which may result from sexual involvement between a lawyer and his or her client during the period that an attorney-client relationship exists, and that emotional detachment is essential to the lawyer's ability to render competent legal services. Therefore, in order to ensure that a lawyer acts in the best interest of his or her client, a rule of professional conduct governing sexual relations between attorneys and their clients shall be adopted.

(b) With the approval of the Supreme Court, the State Bar shall adopt a rule of professional conduct governing sexual relations between attorneys and their clients in cases involving, but not limited to, probate matters and domestic relations, including dissolution proceedings, child custody cases, and settlement proceedings.

(c) The State Bar shall submit the proposed rule to the Supreme Court for approval no later than January 1, 1991.

(d) Intentional violation of this rule shall constitute a cause for suspension or disbarment. (Added by Stats. 1989, ch. 1008.)

### **§ 6106.9 Sexual Relations Between Attorney and Client**

(a) It shall constitute cause for the imposition of discipline of an attorney within the meaning of this chapter for an attorney to do any of the following:

(1) Expressly or impliedly condition the performance of legal services for a current or prospective client upon the client's willingness to engage in sexual relations with the attorney.

(2) Employ coercion, intimidation, or undue influence in entering into sexual relations with a client.

(3) Continue representation of a client with whom the attorney has sexual relations if the sexual relations cause the attorney to perform legal services incompetently in violation of Rules 1.1 and 1.3 of the Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of California, or if the sexual relations would, or would be likely to, damage or prejudice the client's case.

(b) Subdivision (a) shall not apply to sexual relations between attorneys and their spouses or persons in an equivalent domestic relationship or to ongoing consensual sexual relationships that predate the initiation of the attorney-client relationship.

(c) Where an attorney in a firm has sexual relations with a client but does not participate in the representation of that client, the attorneys in the firm shall not be subject to discipline under this section solely because of the occurrence of those sexual relations.

(d) For the purposes of this section, "sexual relations" means sexual intercourse or the touching of an intimate part of another person for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification, or abuse.

(e) Any complaint made to the State Bar alleging a violation of subdivision (a) shall be verified under oath by the person making the complaint. (Added by Stats. 1992, ch. 740. Amended by Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

#### **§ 6107 Proceedings Upon Court's Own Knowledge or Upon Information**

The proceedings to disbar or suspend an attorney, on grounds other than the conviction of a felony or misdemeanor, involving moral turpitude, may be taken by the court for the matters within its knowledge, or may be taken upon the information of another. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 289.)

#### **§ 6108 Accusation**

If the proceedings are upon the information of another, the accusation shall be in writing and shall state the matters charged, and be verified by the oath of some person, to the effect that the charges therein contained are true.

The verification may be made upon information and belief when the accusation is presented by an organized bar association. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., §§ 290, 291.)

#### **§ 6109 Order to Appear and Answer; Service**

Upon receiving the accusation, the court shall make an order requiring the accused to appear and answer it at a specified time, and shall cause a copy of the order and of the accusation to be served upon the accused at least five days before the day appointed in the order. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 292.)

#### **§ 6110 Citation**

The court or judge may direct the service of a citation to the accused, requiring him to appear and answer the accusation, to be made by publication for thirty days in a newspaper of general circulation published in the county in which the proceeding is pending, if it appears by affidavit to the satisfaction of the court or judge that the accused either:

- (a) Resides out of the State.
- (b) Has departed from the State.
- (c) Can not, after due diligence, be found within the State.
- (d) Conceals himself to avoid the service of the order to show cause.

The citation shall be:

- (a) Directed to the accused.
- (b) Recite the date of the filing of the accusation, the name of the accuser, and the general nature of the charges against him.
- (c) Require him to appear and answer the accusation at a specified time.

On proof of the publication of the citation as herein required, the court has jurisdiction to proceed to hear the accusation and render judgment with like effect as if an order to show cause and a copy of the accusation had been personally served on the accused. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 292.)

#### **§ 6111 Appearance; Determination Upon Default**

The accused shall appear at the time appointed in the order, and answer the accusation, unless, for sufficient cause, the court assigns another day for that purpose. If

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he does not appear, the court may proceed and determine the accusation in his absence. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 293.)

### **§ 6112 Answer**

The accused may answer to the accusation either by objecting to its sufficiency or by denying it.

If he objects to the sufficiency of the accusation, the objection shall be in writing, but need not be in any specific form. It is sufficient if it presents intelligibly the grounds of the objection.

If he denies the accusation, the denial may be oral and without oath, and shall be entered upon the minutes. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., §§ 294, 295.)

### **§ 6113 Time for Answer After Objection**

If an objection to the sufficiency of the accusation is not sustained, the accused shall answer within the time designated by the court. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 296.)

### **§ 6114 Judgment Upon Plea of Guilty or Failure to Answer; Trial Upon Denial of Charges**

If the accused pleads guilty, or refuses to answer the accusation, the court shall proceed to judgment of disbarment or suspension.

If he denies the matters charged, the court shall, at such time as it may appoint, proceed to try the accusation. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 297.)

### **§ 6115 Reference to Take Depositions**

The court may, in its discretion, order a reference to a committee to take depositions in the matter. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 298.)

### **§ 6116 Judgment**

When an attorney has been found guilty of the charges made in proceedings not based upon a record of conviction, judgment shall be rendered disbaring the attorney or suspending him from practice for a limited time, according to the gravity of the offense charged. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 299.)

### **§ 6117 Effect of Disbarment or Suspension**

During such disbarment or suspension, the attorney shall be precluded from practicing law.

When disbarred, his name shall be stricken from the roll of attorneys. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 299.)

**§ 6118** (Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Repealed by Stats. 1963, ch. 79.)

## **ARTICLE 7 UNLAWFUL PRACTICE OF LAW**

### **§ 6125 Necessity of Active Licensee Status in State Bar**

No person shall practice law in California unless the person is an active licensee of the State Bar. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 47. Amended by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6126 Unauthorized Practice or Advertising as a Misdemeanor**

(a) Any person advertising or holding himself or herself out as practicing or entitled to practice law or otherwise practicing law who is not an active licensee of the State Bar, or otherwise authorized pursuant to statute or court rule to practice law in this state at the time of doing so, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in a county jail or by a fine of up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or by both that fine and imprisonment. Upon a second or subsequent conviction, the person shall be confined in a county jail for not less than 90 days, except in an unusual case where the interests of justice would be served by imposition of a lesser sentence or a fine. If the court imposes only a fine or a sentence of less than 90 days for a second or subsequent conviction under this subdivision, the court shall state the reasons for its sentencing choice on the record.

(b) Any person who has been involuntarily enrolled as an inactive licensee of the State Bar, or whose license has been suspended, or has been disbarred, or has resigned from the State Bar with charges pending, and thereafter practices or attempts to practice law, advertises or holds himself or herself out as practicing or otherwise entitled to practice law, is guilty of a crime

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punishable by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170 of the Penal Code or in a county jail for a period not to exceed six months. However, any person who has been involuntarily enrolled as an inactive licensee of the State Bar pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (e) of Section 6007 and who knowingly thereafter practices or attempts to practice law, or advertises or holds himself or herself out as practicing or otherwise entitled to practice law, is guilty of a crime punishable by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170 of the Penal Code or in a county jail for a period not to exceed six months.

(c) The willful failure of a licensee of the State Bar, or one who has resigned or been disbarred, to comply with an order of the Supreme Court to comply with Rule 9.20 of the California Rules of Court, constitutes a crime punishable by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170 of the Penal Code or in a county jail for a period not to exceed six months.

(d) The penalties provided in this section are cumulative to each other and to any other remedies or penalties provided by law. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 49; Pen. Code, § 161a. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1939, ch. 980; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2002, ch. 394; Stats. 2007, ch. 130; Stats. 2007, ch. 474; Stats. 2011, ch. 15, effective Apr. 4, 2011, operative Oct. 1, 2011; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6126.3 Authority of Courts; Assumption of Jurisdiction Over Practices of Persons Who Advertise or Hold Themselves Out as Entitled to Practice Law but are Not Licensees of the State Bar or Otherwise Authorized to Practice Law**

(a) In addition to any criminal penalties pursuant to Section 6126 or to any contempt proceedings pursuant to Section 6127, the courts of the state shall have the jurisdiction provided in this section when a person advertises or holds himself or herself out as practicing or entitled to practice law, or otherwise practices law, without being an active licensee of the State Bar or otherwise authorized pursuant to statute or court rule to practice law in this state at the time of doing so.

(b) The State Bar, or the superior court on its own motion, may make application to the superior court for the county where the person described in subdivision (a) maintains or more recently has maintained his or her principal office for the practice of law or where he or she resides, for assumption by the court of jurisdiction over

the practice to the extent provided in this section. In any proceeding under this section, the State Bar shall be permitted to intervene and to assume primary responsibility for conducting the action.

(c) An application made pursuant to subdivision (b) shall be verified, and shall state facts showing all of the following:

(1) Probable cause to believe that the facts set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 6126 have occurred.

(2) The interest of the applicant.

(3) Probable cause to believe that the interests of a client or of an interested person or entity will be prejudiced if the proceeding is not maintained.

(d) The application shall be set for hearing, and an order to show cause shall be issued directing the person to show cause why the court should not assume jurisdiction over the practice as provided in this section. A copy of the application and order to show cause shall be served upon the person by personal delivery or, as an alternate method of service, by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the person either at the address at which he or she maintains, or more recently has maintained, his or her principal office or at the address where he or she resides. Service is complete at the time of mailing, but any prescribed period of notice and any right or duty to do any act or make any response within that prescribed period or on a date certain after notice is served by mail shall be extended five days if the place of address is within the State of California, 10 days if the place of address is outside the State of California but within the United States, and 20 days if the place of address is outside the United States. If the State Bar is not the applicant, copies shall also be served upon the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar in similar manner at the time of service on the person who is the subject of the application. The court may prescribe additional or alternative methods of service of the application and order to show cause, and may prescribe methods of notifying and serving notices and process upon other persons and entities in cases not specifically provided herein.

(e) If the court finds that the facts set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 6126 have occurred and that the interests of a client or an interested person or entity will be prejudiced if the proceeding provided herein is not maintained, the court may make an order assuming jurisdiction over the person's practice pursuant to this

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section. If the person to whom the order to show cause is directed does not appear, the court may make its order upon the verified application or upon such proof as it may require. Thereupon, the court shall appoint one or more active licensees of the State Bar to act under its direction to mail a notice of cessation of practice, pursuant to subdivision (g), and may order those appointed attorneys to do one or more of the following:

- (1) Examine the files and records of the practice and obtain information as to any pending matters that may require attention.
  - (2) Notify persons and entities who appear to be clients of the person of the occurrence of the event or events stated in subdivision (a) of Section 6126, and inform them that it may be in their best interest to obtain other legal counsel.
  - (3) Apply for an extension of time pending employment of legal counsel by the client.
  - (4) With the consent of the client, file notices, motions, and pleadings on behalf of the client where jurisdictional time limits are involved and other legal counsel has not yet been obtained.
  - (5) Give notice to the depositor and appropriate persons and entities who may be affected, other than clients, of the occurrence of the event or events.
  - (6) Arrange for the surrender or delivery of clients' papers or property.
  - (7) Arrange for the appointment of a receiver, where applicable, to take possession and control of any and all bank accounts relating to the affected person's practice.
  - (8) Do any other acts that the court may direct to carry out the purposes of this section. The court shall have jurisdiction over the files and records and over the practice of the affected person for the limited purposes of this section, and may make all orders necessary or appropriate to exercise this jurisdiction. The court shall provide a copy of any order issued pursuant to this section to the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar.
- (f) Anyone examining the files and records of the practice of the person described in subdivision (a) shall observe any lawyer-client privilege under Sections 950 and 952 of the Evidence Code and shall make disclosure

only to the extent necessary to carry out the purposes of this section. That disclosure shall be a disclosure that is reasonably necessary for the accomplishment of the purpose for which the person described in subdivision (a) was consulted. The appointment of a licensee of the State Bar pursuant to this section shall not affect the lawyer-client privilege, which privilege shall apply to communications by or to the appointed licensees to the same extent as it would have applied to communications by or to the person described in subdivision (a).

(g) The notice of cessation of law practice shall contain any information that may be required by the court, including, but not limited to, the finding by the court that the facts set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 6126 have occurred and that the court has assumed jurisdiction of the practice. The notice shall be mailed to all clients, to opposing counsel, to courts and agencies in which the person has pending matters with an identification of the matter, to the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar, and to any other person or entity having reason to be informed of the court's assumption of the practice.

(h) Nothing in this section shall authorize the court or an attorney appointed by it pursuant to this section to approve or disapprove of the employment of legal counsel, to fix terms of legal employment, or to supervise or in any way undertake the conduct of the practice, except to the limited extent provided by paragraphs (3) and (4) of subdivision (e).

(i) Unless court approval is first obtained, neither the attorney appointed pursuant to this section, nor his or her corporation, nor any partner or associate of the attorney shall accept employment as an attorney by any client of the affected person on any matter pending at the time of the appointment. Action taken pursuant to paragraphs (3) and (4) of subdivision (e) shall not be deemed employment for purposes of this subdivision.

(j) Upon a finding by the court that it is more likely than not that the application will be granted and that delay in making the orders described in subdivision (e) will result in substantial injury to clients or to others, the court, without notice or upon notice as it shall prescribe, may make interim orders containing any provisions that the court deems appropriate under the circumstances. Such an interim order shall be served in the manner provided in subdivision (d) and, if the application and order to show cause have not yet been served, the application and order to show cause shall be served at the time of serving the interim order.

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(k) No person or entity shall incur any liability by reason of the institution or maintenance of a proceeding brought under this section. No person or entity shall incur any liability for an act done or omitted to be done pursuant to order of the court under this section. No person or entity shall be liable for failure to apply for court jurisdiction under this section. Nothing in this section shall affect any obligation otherwise existing between the affected person and any other person or entity.

(l) An order pursuant to this section is not appealable and shall not be stayed by petition for a writ, except as ordered by the superior court or by the appellate court.

(m) A licensee of the State Bar appointed pursuant to this section shall serve without compensation. However, the licensee may be paid reasonable compensation by the State Bar in cases where the State Bar has determined that the licensee has devoted extraordinary time and services that were necessary to the performance of the licensee's duties under this article. All payments of compensation for time and services shall be at the discretion of the State Bar. Any licensee shall be entitled to reimbursement from the State Bar for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of the licensee's duties under this article. Upon court approval of expenses or compensation for time and services, the State Bar shall be entitled to reimbursement therefor from the person described in subdivision (a) or his or her estate. (Added by Stats. 2005, ch. 273. Amended by Stats. 2006, ch. 538.; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6126.4 Authority of Courts to Assume Jurisdiction Extends to Immigration Consultants**

Section 6126.3 shall apply to a person acting in the capacity of an immigration consultant pursuant to Chapter 19.5 (commencing with Section 22440) who advertises or holds himself or herself out as practicing or entitled to practice law, or otherwise practices law. (Added by Stats. 2006, ch. 605.)

### **§ 6126.5 Relief**

(a) In addition to any remedies and penalties available in any enforcement action brought in the name of the people of the State of California by the Attorney General, a district attorney, or a city attorney, acting as a public prosecutor, the court shall award relief in the enforcement action for any person who obtained services offered or provided in violation of Section 6125

or 6126 or who purchased any goods, services, or real or personal property in connection with services offered or provided in violation of Section 6125 or 6126 against the person who violated Section 6125 or 6126, or who sold goods, services, or property in connection with that violation. The court shall consider the following relief:

- (1) Actual damages.
- (2) Restitution of all amounts paid.
- (3) The amount of penalties and tax liabilities incurred in connection with the sale or transfer of assets to pay for any goods, services, or property.
- (4) Reasonable attorney's fees and costs expended to rectify errors made in the unlawful practice of law.
- (5) Prejudgment interest at the legal rate from the date of loss to the date of judgment.
- (6) Appropriate equitable relief, including the rescission of sales made in connection with a violation of law.

(b) The relief awarded under paragraphs (1) to (6), inclusive, of subdivision (a) shall be distributed to, or on behalf of, the person for whom it was awarded or, if it is impracticable to do so, shall be distributed as may be directed by the court pursuant to its equitable powers.

(c) The court shall also award the Attorney General, district attorney, or city attorney reasonable attorney's fees and costs and, in the court's discretion, exemplary damages as provided in Section 3294 of the Civil Code.

(d) This section shall not be construed to create, abrogate, or otherwise affect claims, rights, or remedies, if any, that may be held by a person or entity other than those law enforcement agencies described in subdivision (a). The remedies provided in this section are cumulative to each other and to the remedies and penalties provided under other laws. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 304.)

### **§ 6126.7 Translation of Specified Phrases; Violation; Remedies**

(a) It is a violation of subdivision (a) of Section 6126 for any person who is not an attorney to literally translate from English into another language, in any document, including an advertisement, stationery, letterhead, business card, or other comparable written material, any

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words or titles, including, but not limited to, “notary public,” “notary,” “licensed,” “attorney,” or “lawyer,” that imply that the person is an attorney. As provided in this subdivision, the literal translation of the phrase “notary public” into Spanish as “notario publico” or “notario,” is expressly prohibited.

(b) For purposes of this section, “literal translation of” or “to literally translate” a word, title, or phrase from one language means the translation of a word, title, or phrase without regard to the true meaning of the word or phrase in the language that is being translated.

(c) (1) In addition to any other remedies and penalties prescribed in this article, a person who violates this section shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per day for each violation, to be assessed and collected in a civil action brought by the State Bar.

(2) In assessing the amount of the civil penalty, the court may consider relevant circumstances presented by the parties to the case, including, but not limited to, the following:

(A) The nature and severity of the misconduct.

(B) The number of violations.

(C) The length of time over which the misconduct occurred, and the persistence of the misconduct.

(D) The wilfulness of the misconduct.

(E) The defendant’s assets, liabilities, and net worth.

(3) The court shall grant a prevailing plaintiff reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs.

(4) A civil action brought under this section shall be commenced within four years after the cause of action accrues.

(5) In a civil action brought by the State Bar under this section, the civil penalty collected shall be paid to the State Bar and allocated to the fund established pursuant to Section 6033 to provide free legal services related to immigration reform act services to clients of limited means or to a fund for the purposes of mitigating unpaid claims of injured immigrant clients under Section 22447, as directed by the Board of Trustees of the State Bar.

The board shall annually report any collection and expenditure of funds for the preceding fiscal year, as authorized by this section, to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary. The report required by this section may be included in the report described in Section 6086.15. (Added by Stats. 2013, ch. 574. Amended by Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

### § 6127 Contempt of Court

The following acts or omissions in respect to the practice of law are contempts of the authority of the courts:

(a) Assuming to be an officer or attorney of a court and acting as such, without authority.

(b) Advertising or holding oneself out as practicing or as entitled to practice law or otherwise practicing law in any court, without being an active licensee of the State Bar.

Proceedings to adjudge a person in contempt of court under this section are to be taken in accordance with the provisions of Title V of Part III of the Code of Civil Procedure. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., §§ 281, 1209. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1939, ch. 980; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6127.5 Law Corporation Under Professional Corporation Act

Nothing in Sections 6125, 6126 and 6127 shall be deemed to apply to the acts and practices of a law corporation duly certificated pursuant to the Professional Corporation Act, as contained in Part 4 (commencing with Section 13400) of Division 3 of Title 1 of the Corporations Code, and pursuant to Article 10 (commencing with Section 6160) of Chapter 4 of Division 3 of this code, when the law corporation is in compliance with the requirements of (a) the Professional Corporation Act; (b) Article 10 (commencing with Section 6160) of Chapter 4 of Division 3 of this code; and (c) all other statutes and all rules and regulations now or hereafter enacted or adopted pertaining to such corporation and the conduct of its affairs. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375.)

**§ 6128 Deceit, Collusion, Delay of Suit and Improper Receipt of Money as Misdemeanor**

Every attorney is guilty of a misdemeanor who either:

- (a) Is guilty of any deceit or collusion, or consents to any deceit or collusion, with intent to deceive the court or any party.
- (b) Willfully delays his client's suit with a view to his own gain.
- (c) Willfully receives any money or allowance for or on account of any money which he has not laid out or become answerable for.

Any violation of the provisions of this section is punishable by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six months, or by a fine not exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500), or by both. (Origin: Pen. Code § 160. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1976, ch. 1125.)

**§ 6129 Buying Claim as Misdemeanor**

Every attorney who, either directly or indirectly, buys or is interested in buying any evidence of debt or thing in action, with intent to bring suit thereon, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Any violation of the provisions of this section is punishable by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six months, or by a fine not exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500), or by both. (Origin: Pen. Code § 161. Amended by Stats. 1976, ch. 1125.)

**§ 6130 Disbarred or Suspended Attorney Suing as Assignee**

No person, who has been an attorney, shall while a judgment of disbarment or suspension is in force appear on his own behalf as plaintiff in the prosecution of any action where the subject of the action has been assigned to him subsequent to the entry of the judgment of disbarment or suspension and solely for purpose of collection. (Origin: Code Civ. Proc., § 300.)

**§ 6131 Aiding Defense Where Partner or Self has Acted as Public Prosecutor; Misdemeanor and Disbarment**

Every attorney is guilty of a misdemeanor and, in addition to the punishment prescribed therefor, shall be disbarred:

- (a) Who directly or indirectly advises in relation to, or aids, or promotes the defense of any action or proceeding in any court the prosecution of which is carried on, aided or promoted by any person as district attorney or other public prosecutor with whom such person is directly or indirectly connected as a partner.

- (b) Who, having himself prosecuted or in any manner aided or promoted any action or proceeding in any court as district attorney or other public prosecutor, afterwards, directly or indirectly, advises in relation to or takes any part in the defense thereof, as attorney or otherwise, or who takes or receives any valuable consideration from or on behalf of any defendant in any such action upon any understanding or agreement whatever having relation to the defense thereof.

This section does not prohibit an attorney from defending himself in person, as attorney or counsel, when prosecuted, either civilly or criminally. (Origin: Pen. Code, §§ 162, 163. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34.)

**§ 6132 Law Firm Name—Removal of Name of Disciplined Attorney**

Any law firm, partnership, corporation, or association which contains the name of an attorney who is disbarred, or who resigned with charges pending, in its business name shall remove the name of that attorney from its business name, and from all signs, advertisements, letterhead, and other materials containing that name, within 60 days of the disbarment or resignation. (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159.)

**§ 6133 Supervision of Disciplined Attorney Activities by Law Firms**

Any attorney or any law firm, partnership, corporation, or association employing an attorney who has resigned, or who is under actual suspension from the practice of law, or is disbarred, shall not permit that attorney to practice law or so advertise or hold himself or herself out as practicing law and shall supervise him or her in any other assigned duties. A willful violation of this section

constitutes a cause for discipline. (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159.)

## ARTICLE 8 REVENUE

### § 6140 Annual License Fee; Time of Payment

(a) The board shall fix the annual license fee for active licensees for 2026 at a sum not exceeding four hundred dollars (\$400).

(b) The annual license fee for active licensees is payable on or before the date set by the State Bar, which shall not be less than 12 months from the prior year's due date. Individuals who qualify for a waiver pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 6141.1 shall be permitted to pay fees on an installment basis, with interest and other costs directly associated with the use of an installment plan, in the manner determined by the State Bar. Additionally, if the board finds it appropriate and feasible, it may provide by rule for payment of fees on an installment basis with interest, by credit card, or by other means, and may charge licensees choosing any alternative method of payment an additional fee to defray costs incurred by that election.

(c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2027, and as of that date is repealed. (Added by Stats. 2022, ch. 419. Amended by Stats. 2023, ch. 697; Stats. 2024, ch. 227; Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

**§ 6140.01** (Added by Stats. 2010, ch. 476. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417, and repealed by its own terms, operative January 1, 2014.)

### § 6140.02 Association Adoption of Dues Schedule; Voluntary Payment; Collection of Membership Fees

(a) The California Lawyers Association shall adopt a dues schedule for membership and shall provide that schedule to the State Bar by October 1 of each year.

(b) Payment of dues for membership in the California Lawyers Association and individual sections of the California Lawyers Association is voluntary. Each licensee of the State Bar shall have the option of joining the California Lawyers Association and one or more individual sections by including the dues set by the

schedule established pursuant to subdivision (a) with that State Bar licensee's annual license fees. Any contribution or membership option included with a State Bar of California mandatory fees billing statement shall include a statement that the California Lawyers Association is not a part of the State Bar and that membership in that organization is voluntary.

(c) The State Bar shall collect, in conjunction with the collection of its annual license fees under Section 6140, membership fees for the California Lawyers Association as provided by subdivision (b) of Section 6031.5.

(d) This section is not intended to limit the California Lawyers Association membership to licensees of the State Bar or restrict the California Lawyers Association from collecting membership dues or donations by other means. (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 422. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### § 6140.03 Increase in Annual Fee to Support Nonprofits Providing Free Legal Services to Needy; Opt Out Provision

(a) The board shall increase each of the annual license fees fixed by Sections 6140 and 6141 by an additional forty-five dollars (\$45), to be allocated only for the purposes established pursuant to Section 6033 and subdivision (b), except to the extent that a licensee elects not to support those activities.

(b) (1) Ten dollars (\$10) of the forty-five-dollar (\$45) fee shall be allocated to qualified legal services projects or qualified support centers, as defined in Section 6213, to fund law student summer fellowships for the purpose of supporting law students interested in pursuing a career in legal services for indigent persons. The State Bar shall not make any deductions from the ten dollars (\$10) for any reason, including, but not limited to, administrative fees, costs, or expenses of the State Bar.

(2) Except as provided in paragraphs (4) and (5), funds shall be allocated pursuant to a competitive grant process administered by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission and not through the formula set forth in Section 6216.

(3) In awarding these grants, preference shall be given to fund proposals for fellowships serving rural or underserved communities and that serve clients regardless of immigration or citizenship status.

(4) Any funds under paragraph (1) not allocated as of January 1, 2030, shall be distributed to qualified legal services projects and support centers pursuant to the formula set forth in Section 6216.

(5) The allocation described in this subdivision shall remain in effect until January 1, 2030, and after that date, the entire forty-five dollars (\$45) shall be allocated only for the purposes established pursuant to Section 6033.

(c) The invoice provided to licensees for payment of the annual license fee shall provide each licensee the option of deducting forty-five dollars (\$45) from the annual license fee if the licensee elects not to have this amount allocated for the purposes established pursuant to Section 6033. (Added by Stats. 2020, ch. 360. Amended by Stats. 2022, ch. 419; Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

**§ 6140.05 State Bar Lobbying Activities—Keller Deduction; Limits on Expenditures**

(a) At the election of the board, the invoice provided to licensees for payment of the annual license fee may provide each licensee the option of adding up to five dollars (\$5) to the annual fee if the licensee elects to support lobbying and related activities by the State Bar outside of the parameters established by the United States Supreme Court in *Keller v. State Bar of California* (1990) 496 U.S. 1.

(b) For the support or defense of lobbying and related activities conducted by the State Bar on or after January 1, 2000, outside of the parameters of *Keller v. State Bar of California*, and in support or defense of any litigation arising therefrom, the Board of Trustees of the State Bar shall not expend a sum exceeding the amount paid by licensees pursuant to the optional increase for lobbying and related activities, as set forth in subdivision (a).

(c) As used in this section, “lobbying and related activities by the State Bar” includes the consideration of measures by the Board of Trustees of the State Bar that are deemed outside the parameters established in *Keller v. State Bar*, the purview determination, lobbying and the preparation for lobbying of the measures, and any litigation in support or defense of that lobbying.

(d) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2023. (Added by Stats. 2022, ch. 419.)

**§ 6140.1 Annual Budget**

(a) The State Bar annually shall submit its adopted final budget by February 28, so that the budget can be reviewed and approved in conjunction with any bill that would authorize the imposition of license fees. Each budget shall include the estimated revenues, expenditures, and staffing levels for all of the programs and funds administered by the State Bar. In addition to the final budget, the submission shall also include the proposed budget for the following year. Any bill that authorizes the imposition of license fees shall be a fiscal bill and shall be referred to the appropriate fiscal committees; provided, however, that the bill may be approved by a majority vote.

(b) The State Bar shall submit the budget documents in a form comparable to the documents prepared by state departments for inclusion in the Governor’s Budget and the salaries and wages supplement. In addition, the bar shall provide supplementary schedules detailing operating expenses and equipment, all revenue sources, any reimbursements or interfund transfers, fund balances, and other related supporting documentation. The bar shall submit budget change proposals with its final budget, explaining the need for any differences between the current and proposed budgets. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 2, effective February 4, 1986. Amended by Stats. 1986, ch. 1510; Stats. 1987, ch. 688; Stats. 1988, ch. 1149; Stats. 1992, ch. 1296; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6140.10 State Bar Building Lease Costs; Report to Legislature**

(a) In addition to the fee collected pursuant to Sections 6140 and 6141, the State Bar may collect revenue to pay for lease costs associated with leasing space in the building located at 180 Howard Street, San Francisco, as follows:

- (1) A fee not to exceed fifteen dollars (\$15) annually from each individual active licensee.
- (2) A fee not to exceed three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) from each individual inactive licensee.

(b) On or before July 1, 2028, the State Bar shall transmit to the Legislature a report detailing the following:

- (1) Potential options for lowering the costs associated with leasing the property at 180 Howard

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Street, San Francisco, including, but not limited to, the following:

(A) Strategies for subleasing space at the property at 180 Howard Street, San Francisco.

(B) Options for ending the lease at the property at 180 Howard Street, San Francisco, prior to its expiration, including the amount of money required to pay liquidated damages for ending the lease before term.

(C) Identify potential state-owned buildings in the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward census area.

(c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2030, and as of that date is repealed. (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6140.11 State Bar Employees Salaries and Benefits Funding; Report to Legislature; Workforce Reduction Plan**

(a) In addition to the fee collected pursuant to Sections 6140 and 6141, the State Bar may collect revenue to fund the salaries and benefits of employees of the State Bar, including benefits identified in the applicable memorandums of understandings with the bargaining units of State Bar employees, as follows:

(1) A fee not to exceed fifty-two dollars (\$52) annually from each individual active licensee.

(2) A fee not to exceed fourteen dollars (\$14) from each individual inactive licensee.

(b) The State Bar shall seek to achieve, through employee attrition only, a 15 percent vacancy rate by April 1, 2027.

(c) The State Bar shall not terminate an employee solely for the purpose of meeting the target vacancy rate specified in subdivision (b).

(d) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2028, and as of that date is repealed. (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6140.12 State Bar Five-Year Strategic Plan; Implementation and Reporting Requirements**

The board shall complete and implement a five-year strategic plan to be updated every two years. In conjunction with the submission of the board's adopted final budget as required by Section 6140.1, the chair shall report to the Supreme Court, the Governor, and the Senate and Assembly Committees on Judiciary on the measures the board has taken to implement the strategic plan and shall indicate the measures the board will need to take in the remaining years of the strategic plan to address the projected needs contained in the plan. (Added by Stats. 2011, ch. 417. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6140.13 Costs of Administering Compliance Reviews and Audits of Client Trust Accounts**

(a) In addition to the fee collected pursuant to Sections 6140 and 6141, the State Bar may collect revenue not to exceed the actual cost of administering compliance reviews and audits of client trust accounts, as follows:

(1) A fee not to exceed five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) annually from each individual active licensee.

(2) A fee not to exceed one dollar and twenty-five cents (\$1.25) from each individual inactive licensee.

(b) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2029, and as of that date is repealed. (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6140.14 Costs of Pilot Programs to Fund Disciplinary Diversion Programs; Report to Legislature**

(a) In addition to the fee collected pursuant to Sections 6140 and 6141, the State Bar may collect revenue not to exceed the actual cost of the pilot programs to fund the disciplinary diversion programs, as described in the report to the Legislature submitted pursuant to Section 6145.1, as follows:

(1) A fee not to exceed five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) annually from each individual active licensee.

(2) A fee not to exceed one dollar and twenty-five cents (\$1.25) from each individual inactive licensee.

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(b) On or before April 1, 2027, the State Bar shall transmit to the Legislature a report detailing the following:

- (1) The number of attorneys referred to the diversion program.
- (2) The number of complaints resulting in a referral to the diversion program.
- (3) The rate of reoffending by attorneys referred to the diversion program.
- (4) The total reduction in caseload for the Office of Chief Trial Counsel resulting from the pilot disciplinary diversion program.

(c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2029, and as of that date is repealed. (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6140.16 State Bar Work Force Plan**

(a) To align its staffing with its mission to protect the public as provided in Section 6001.1 and to provide guidance to the State Bar and the Legislature in allocating resources, the State Bar shall develop and implement a workforce plan for its discipline system and conduct a public sector compensation and benefits study. The workforce plan and compensation study shall be used to reassess the numbers and classifications of staff required to conduct the activities of the State Bar's disciplinary activities.

(b) The workforce planning shall include the development and recommendation of an appropriate backlog goal, an assessment of the staffing needed to achieve that goal while ensuring that the discipline process is not compromised, and the creation of policies and procedures sufficient to provide adequate guidance to the staff of each unit within the discipline system.

(c) In addition to the requirements in subdivisions (a) and (b), the State Bar shall conduct a thorough analysis of its priorities and necessary operating costs and develop a spending plan, which includes its fund balances, to determine a reasonable amount for the annual license fee that reflects its actual or known costs and those to implement its workforce plan.

(d) The State Bar shall submit a report on its workforce plan and spending plan to the Legislature by May 15, 2016, so that the plans can be reviewed in conjunction

with the bill that would authorize the imposition of the State Bar's license fee. The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code. The State Bar shall complete and implement its workforce plan by December 31, 2016. (Former § 6140.16 added by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639, repealed by Stats. 2015, ch. 537. New § 6140.16 added by Stats. 2015, ch. 537. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6140.2 Goal for Timely Disposition of Complaints**

The State Bar shall set as a goal the improvement of its disciplinary system so that no more than six months will elapse from the receipt of complaints to the time of dismissal, admonishment of the attorney involved, or the filing of formal charges by the State Bar Office of Trial Counsel. As to complaints designated as complicated matters by the Chief Trial Counsel, it shall be the goal and policy of the State Bar to dismiss a complaint, admonish the attorney, or have the State Bar Office of Trial Counsel file formal charges within 12 months after it receives a complaint alleging attorney misconduct. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 2, effective February 4, 1986. Amended by Stats. 2004, ch. 193; Stats. 2021, ch. 723.)

**§ 6140.3** (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 2. Repealed by Stats. 2007, ch. 474.)

**§ 6140.3** (Added by Stats. 2008, ch. 165, and repealed by its own terms, operative January 1, 2014.)

**§ 6140.35** (Added by Stats. 2007, ch. 474. Amended by Stats. 2010, ch. 476, and repealed by its own terms, operative January 1, 2014.)

**§ 6140.36** (Added by Stats. 2008, ch. 165. Amended by Stats. 2010, ch. 476, and repealed by its own terms, operative January 1, 2014.)

### **§ 6140.37 Information Technology Projects—In-House Employee Preference**

The State Bar shall have a preference for using in-house employees for information technology projects, whenever possible. Nothing in this section shall be read to be inconsistent with any memorandum of understanding between the State Bar and the recognized

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employee organizations or any relevant principles of labor law. (Added by Stats. 2010, ch. 2, operative January 25, 2010.)

**§ 6140.38** (Added by Stats. 2010, ch. 2. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 296, and repealed by its own terms, operative January 1, 2014.)

**§ 6140.4** (Added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1149. Repealed by Stats. 1995, ch. 193.)

### **§ 6140.5 Client Security Fund; Establishment; Payments; Administration; Funding**

(a) The board shall establish and administer a Client Security Fund to relieve or mitigate pecuniary losses caused by the dishonest conduct of licensees of the State Bar, foreign legal consultants registered with the State Bar, and attorneys registered with the State Bar under the Multijurisdictional Practice Program, arising from or connected with the practice of law. Any payments from the fund shall be discretionary and shall be subject to regulation, conditions, and rules as the board shall prescribe. The board may delegate the administration of the fund to the State Bar Court, or to any board or committee created by the board of trustees.

(b) Upon making a payment to a person who has applied to the fund for payment to relieve or mitigate pecuniary losses caused by the dishonest conduct of a licensee, the State Bar is subrogated, to the extent of that payment, to the rights of the applicant against any person or persons who, or entity that, caused the pecuniary loss. The State Bar may bring an action to enforce those rights within three years from the date of payment to the applicant.

(c) Any licensee whose actions have caused the payment of funds to an applicant from the Client Security Fund shall owe those funds to the State Bar and reimburse the Client Security Fund for all moneys paid out as a result of the licensee's conduct with interest, in addition to payment of the assessment for the procedural costs of processing the claim. The State Bar may collect any money paid out by the Client Security Fund pursuant to this subdivision through any means provided by law. The licensee's obligation to reimburse the Client Security Fund pursuant to this section is imposed as a penalty, payable to and for the benefit of the State Bar of California, a public corporation created pursuant to Article VI of the California Constitution, to

promote rehabilitation and protect the public. This subdivision is declaratory of existing law.

(d) For a publicly reprovved or suspended licensee, the reimbursed amount by the Client Security Fund, plus applicable interest and costs, shall be paid as a condition of continued practice. This amount shall be added to and become a part of the license fee of a publicly reprovved or suspended licensee unless time for payment is extended or otherwise modified.

(e) For a licensee who resigns with disciplinary charges pending or a licensee who is resigned or disbarred, the reimbursed amount by the Client Security Fund, plus applicable interest and costs, shall be paid as a condition of applying for reinstatement of the licensee's license to practice law or return to active license status.

(f) Any assessment against an attorney pursuant to subdivision (c) that is part of an order imposing a public reprovval on a licensee or is part of an order imposing discipline or accepting a resignation with a disciplinary matter pending, or any reimbursed amount that is part of a final determination by the Client Security Fund, may also be enforced as a money judgment. This subdivision does not limit the power of the Supreme Court to alter the restitution amount owed pursuant to an order imposing public reprovval on a licensee or an order imposing discipline or accepting a resignation with a disciplinary matter pending, or to authorize the State Bar Court to do the same.

(g) To obtain a money judgment pursuant to subdivision (f) that is not part of a court order imposing a public reprovval on a licensee or is not part of a court order imposing discipline or accepting a resignation with a disciplinary matter pending, the State Bar shall file a certified copy of the Notice of Payment of the Client Security Fund with the clerk of the superior court of any county. The clerk shall immediately enter judgment in conformity with the Notice of Payment. The judgment shall have the same force and effect as a judgment in a civil action and may be enforced in the same manner as any other judgment.

(h) The defense of laches shall not be raised by the licensee whose actions have caused the payment of funds to an applicant from the Client Security Fund with respect to any payment owed to the State Bar, or with respect to any collections efforts by the State Bar for those payments.

(i) Judicial review of a decision to approve or deny, in whole or in part, an application for reimbursement from

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the Client Security Fund may be had by filing a petition for a writ of administrative mandamus pursuant to Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure within 90 days after the date the decision was served. This subdivision is declaratory of existing law.

(j) Subdivisions (c), (f), and (h) have, and shall have, retroactive application, as well as prospective application.

(k) (1) A licensee may be granted relief, in whole or in part, from any payment obligation under subdivision (c), including compromise of any money judgment, or may be granted an extension of time to pay, at the discretion of the State Bar, upon grounds of hardship, special circumstances, or other good cause.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (c), 50 percent of the collections received during the 2025 calendar year shall be deposited in the Client Security Fund and 50 percent shall be deposited in the State Bar's general fund.

(l) As used in this section, "licensee" shall include a foreign legal consultant registered with the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 1971, ch. 1338. Amended by Stats. 1986, ch. 2, effective February 4, 1986; Stats. 1986, ch. 1510; Stats. 1988, ch. 484; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 2003, 334; Stats. 2005, ch. 341; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2020, ch. 360; Stats. 2023, ch. 697; Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6140.55 Increase Annual License Fee—Client Security Fund; Cost of Administration; Excess Funds**

(a) The board may increase the annual license fees fixed by it pursuant to Section 6140 by an additional amount per active licensee not to exceed forty dollars (\$40), and the annual license fees fixed by it pursuant to Section 6141 by an additional amount per inactive licensee not to exceed ten dollars (\$10), in any year, the additional amount to be applied only for the purposes of the Client Security Fund and the costs of its administration, including, but not limited to, the costs of processing, determining, defending, or insuring claims against the fund.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the board may disburse to the State Bar's general fund two million dollars (\$2,000,000) from the Client Security Fund as reimbursement for funds provided to the Client Security

Fund from the State Bar's general fund in 2017 and the legislative activities fund in 2016.

(c) This section shall be operative on January 1, 2025. (Former § 6140.55 added by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639, repealed by Stats. 2023, ch. 697. Added by Stats. 2023, ch. 697. Amended by Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

### **§ 6140.56 State Bar Analysis and Review of Client Security Fund; Report to Legislature**

(a) To ensure that the Client Security Fund can adequately protect the public and relieve or mitigate financial losses caused by the dishonest conduct of licensees of the State Bar by paying claims in a timely manner, the State Bar shall conduct a thorough analysis of the Client Security Fund, including a review of the State Bar's oversight of the Client Security Fund, to ensure that the structure provides for the most effective and efficient operation of the fund, a determination of the ongoing needs of the fund to satisfy claims in a timely manner, a review of additional efforts that can be taken to increase the collection of payments from the responsible attorneys, and a review of other State Bar expenditures to determine whether other expenditures that do not directly impact the State Bar's public protection functions, including, but not limited to, executive salaries and benefits, can be reduced or redirected in order to better fund the Client Security Fund through existing revenue, and, whether, after all other options have been fully and thoroughly exhausted, an increase in license fees is necessary to ensure that the Client Security Fund can timely pay claims.

(b) The State Bar shall submit a report on its analysis of the Client Security Fund to the Legislature by March 15, 2018, so that the plans can be reviewed in conjunction with the bill that would authorize the imposition of the State Bar's license fee. The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(c) For purposes of this section, "timely manner" means within 12 months from either the time the claim is received by the State Bar or the resolution of the underlying discipline case involving an attorney licensee that is a prerequisite to paying the claim, whichever is later. (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 422. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6140.6 Costs of Disciplinary System**

The board may increase the annual license fees fixed by Sections 6140 and 6141 by an additional amount not to exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25) to be applied to the costs of the disciplinary system. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 1510. Amended by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639; Stats. 2005, ch. 341; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6140.7 Disciplinary Costs Added to License Fee**

Costs assessed against a licensee publicly reprovved or suspended, where suspension is stayed and the licensee is not actually suspended, shall be added to and become a part of the license fee of the licensee, for the next calendar year. Unless time for payment of discipline costs is extended pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 6086.10, costs assessed against a licensee who resigns with disciplinary charges pending or by a licensee who is actually suspended or disbarred shall be paid as a condition of applying for reinstatement of his or her license to practice law or return to active license status. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 662. Amended by Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2004, ch. 529; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6140.8 Order Imposed on Licensee to Pay Restitution; Money Judgment Enforcement; Application with Client Security Fund**

(a) Any order imposing upon a licensee public reprovval, discipline, or accepting a resignation with a disciplinary matter pending, in which the licensee is ordered to pay restitution is enforceable as a money judgment by the payee. In the entry or enforcement of any money judgment based on such order, the payee shall reduce the amount owed by the licensee to the payee by any reimbursement received by the payee from the Client Security Fund or by any amount received as criminal restitution ordered pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 1202.4 of the Penal Code, or by the combined amount, if applicable.

(b) A money judgment entered pursuant to this section shall not affect the right of a payee to file an application with the Client Security Fund to recover any portion of the subject restitution as provided by Section 6140.5, or as otherwise provided by law.

(c) A payee or other applicant who files an application with the Client Security Fund has an ongoing obligation to inform the Client Security Fund as to any payment

recovered directly or indirectly from the attorney or any other source.

(d) To the extent that a payee or other applicant has already collected on any portion of the loss, the Client Security Fund may reduce any qualifying reimbursable amount by the amount collected.

(e) To the extent that the Client Security Fund reimburses a payee or other applicant, as provided in Section 6140.5, the licensee or former licensee shall reimburse the Client Security Fund for that payment.

(f) As used in this section, "payee" means an individual or entity who is identified as the beneficiary of restitution in any order imposing upon a licensee public reprovval, discipline, or accepting a resignation with a disciplinary matter pending, in which the licensee is ordered to pay restitution to such individual or entity. (Added by Stats. 2020, ch. 360.)

**§ 6140.9 Support for Programs Established Pursuant to Attorney Diversion and Assistance Act and Related Programs**

(a) Moneys for the support of the program established pursuant to Article 15 (commencing with Section 6230), treatment services for those who cannot afford to pay, and related programs approved by the committee established pursuant to Section 6231 shall be paid in whole or part by a fee of ten dollars (\$10) per active licensee per year, and by a fee of five dollars (\$5) per inactive licensee per year, except that for 2020 only, the fee shall be one dollar (\$1) per active licensee and zero dollars (\$0) per inactive licensee. The State Bar is not required to expend any additional funds to either support those programs or to provide treatment services for those who cannot afford to pay.

(b) On and after January 1, 2019, one dollar (\$1) of the ten-dollar (\$10) fee paid by each active licensee pursuant to subdivision (a) shall be transferred by the State Bar to a statewide nonprofit corporation established by attorneys that has, for the last 25 years or more, provided peer support to attorneys recovering from alcohol and substance abuse in a confidential and anonymous manner, to fund the support of recovery efforts of the nonprofit corporation. In 2020 only, the statewide nonprofit corporation shall receive the one-dollar (\$1) fee paid by each active licensee.

(c) Any nonprofit corporation that receives funds pursuant to subdivision (b) shall submit an annual report

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to the State Bar accounting for the use of the funds. The report shall be submitted to the State Bar no later than March 1, 2020, and no later than March 1 of each year thereafter. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) An accounting of all receipts and expenditures of the funds.
- (2) The balance of the funds as of the end of the previous calendar year.
- (3) A brief narrative describing the goals of the work supported by the expenditures.
- (4) A summary of the number of clients served, the modality of treatment, and any outcome data on the impact of the treatment.

(d) The board may seek alternative sources for funding the program. Any excess funds not needed to support the program, including reserve funds, may be transferred to fund the Client Security Fund established pursuant to Section 6140.5, provided there are sufficient funds available to fully support the program.

(e) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2025. (Former § 6140.9 added by Stats. 1988, ch. 1149, repealed by Stats. 2023, ch. 697. Added by Stats. 2023, ch. 697, operative January 1, 2025.)

**§ 6140.10** (Added by Stats. 1991, ch. 189. Repealed by Stats. 2001, ch. 24.)

**§ 6140.15** (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639. Repealed by Stats. 2001, ch. 24.)

### **§ 6141 Inactive License Fee; Waivers**

(a) The board shall fix the annual license fee for inactive licensees at a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100). The annual license fee for inactive licensees is payable on or before the date set by the State Bar, which shall not be less than 12 months from the prior year's due date.

(b) An inactive licensee shall not be required to pay the annual license fee for inactive licensees for any calendar year following the calendar year in which the licensee attains 70 years of age.

(c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2027, and as of that date is repealed. (Added by Stats. 2022, ch. 419. Amended by Stats. 2023, ch. 697; Stats. 2024, ch. 227; Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

### **§ 6141.1 Waiver of License Fee**

(a) The payment by any licensee of the annual license fee, any portion thereof, or any penalty thereon, may be waived by the board as it may provide by rule. The board may require submission of recent federal and state income tax returns and other proof of financial condition as to those licensees seeking waiver of all or a portion of their fee or penalties on the ground of financial hardship.

(b) The board shall adopt a rule or rules providing that an active licensee who can demonstrate total gross annual individual income from all sources of less than sixty thousand four hundred and seventy-eight dollars and thirty-five cents (\$60,478.35), which is reflective of the previous limit adjusted for 20 years of inflation pursuant to the Consumer Price Index, shall presumptively qualify for a waiver of 25 percent of the annual license fee. (Added by Stats. 1941, ch. 144. Amended by Stats. 1977, ch. 58; Stats. 1988, ch. 1149; Stats. 1999, ch. 342; Stats. 2003, ch. 334; Stats. 2005, ch. 341; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2019, 698.)

### **§ 6141.3 Affinity Programs; Use of Revenues**

(a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), the State Bar shall provide offers of discounts and other benefits to active and inactive licensees of the State Bar, including, but not limited to, insurance and noninsurance affinity programs, until December 31, 2018, and insurance affinity programs only, after December 31, 2018. Any revenue generated by these programs shall be used as follows:

(1) For all revenue received from January 1, 2018, until December 31, 2018, 50 percent of the revenue shall be used to assist the California Lawyers Association in transitioning to an independent entity, 25 percent of the revenue shall be distributed to qualified legal services projects and support centers as provided in Section 6216, and 25 percent shall be used to support the discipline functions of the State Bar or to support the Client Security Fund.

(2) For all revenue received on and after January 1, 2019, until December 31, 2019, 50 percent of the

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revenue shall be distributed to qualified legal services projects and support centers as provided in Section 6216, and 50 percent of the revenue shall be used to support the discipline functions of the State Bar or to support the Client Security Fund.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), if approved by the board of trustees, California ChangeLawyers, and Cal Bar Affinity, a subsidiary of California ChangeLawyers, the State Bar may transfer administration of the programs offering discounts and other benefits to active and inactive licensees of the State Bar under subdivision (a) to Cal Bar Affinity provided that any revenue received, less the administrative costs of the State Bar and Cal Bar Affinity in operating the programs, up to a maximum of 12 percent of the revenue received, and less the taxes incurred by Cal Bar Affinity in operating the programs, shall be distributed as follows from January 1, 2019, until December 31, 2019:

(1) All of the revenue received from the noninsurance affinity programs shall be kept by California ChangeLawyers, which shall distribute 50 percent of that revenue to support the programs of California ChangeLawyers and 50 percent of that revenue to qualified legal services projects and support centers as provided in Section 6216.

(2) For all revenue received from the insurance affinity programs, 50 percent of the revenue shall be kept by California ChangeLawyers, which shall distribute 50 percent of that revenue to support the programs of California ChangeLawyers and 50 percent of that revenue to qualified legal services projects and support centers in accordance with the formula provided in Section 6216, and 50 percent of the revenue shall be used to support the discipline functions of the State Bar or to support the Client Security Fund.

(c) If approved by the California Lawyers Association, California ChangeLawyers, and Cal Bar Affinity, and provided the California Lawyers Association complies with the requirement in subdivision (e), all revenue received from the noninsurance affinity programs and the insurance affinity programs, less the administrative costs of the State Bar and Cal Bar Affinity in operating the programs, up to a maximum of 12 percent of the revenue received, and the taxes incurred by Cal Bar Affinity in operating the programs, shall be distributed as follows on and after January 1, 2020:

(1) The first one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) of revenue received in 2020 and the first one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) received in 2021 shall go to the California Commission on Access to Justice, payable as follows:

(A) Seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) shall be paid on or before March 31, 2020, and seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) shall be paid on or before June 30, 2020.

(B) Thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$37,500) shall be paid on or before March 31, 2021, thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$37,500) shall be paid on or before June 30, 2021, thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$37,500) shall be paid on or before September 30, 2021, and thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$37,500) shall be paid on or before December 31, 2021.

(2) Any additional revenue shall be distributed as follows:

(A) One-third of the remaining revenue shall go to California ChangeLawyers.

(B) One-third of the remaining revenue shall go to the California Lawyers Association or an affiliated 501(c)(3) organization to support their respective diversity, equity and inclusion, access to justice, and civic engagement efforts.

(C) One-third of the remaining revenue shall go to California ChangeLawyers, which shall distribute that revenue to qualified legal services projects and support centers in accordance with the formula provided in Section 6216. However, in any year, a qualified legal services project or support center, as defined in Section 6213, may elect in writing to direct their allocation for that year to California ChangeLawyers for fellowships for law students and law graduates at qualified legal services projects and support centers. California ChangeLawyers shall utilize a competitive grant application process for determining grant awards. In awarding these statewide grants, preference shall be given to qualified legal services projects or support centers that

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serve rural or underserved communities and that serve clients regardless of immigration or citizenship status. The minimum grant amount shall be ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

(d) Given the public protection mission of the State Bar, the Legislature finds that it would be inappropriate for the State Bar to administer the program on a long-term basis. Therefore, should the program continue to operate after December 31, 2018, it is the intent of the Legislature that the program be administered by an entity other than the State Bar.

(e) If the California Lawyers Association elects to accept any share of the affinity funds revenue under this section, the California Lawyers Association shall not create or operate, or participate in the creation or operation, or otherwise solicit its members, or arrange to have its members solicited, for any affinity or royalty program involving similar insurance or noninsurance products or services with a percentage or share of costs being distributed to the California Lawyers Association, other than as provided in this section. If the California Lawyers Association creates or operates, or participates in the creation or operation, or otherwise solicits its members, or arranges to have its members solicited for any affinity or royalty program involving the sale of insurance or noninsurance products or services with a percentage or share of costs being distributed to the California Lawyers Association, all funds that would have been provided to the California Lawyers Association from affinity or royalty programs that transferred from the State Bar or are similar to programs that transferred from the State Bar shall be provided to California ChangeLawyers, which shall distribute 50 percent of that revenue to support the programs of California ChangeLawyers and 50 percent of that revenue to qualified legal services projects and support centers as provided in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) of this section.

(f) The California Lawyers Association or the affiliated 501(c)(3) organization shall submit an annual report to the Legislature by January 31 of each year detailing their use of funds, as provided in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (c), and a statement of compliance with subdivision (e). The report shall cover the prior calendar year from January through December, except for the first report due on January 31, 2026, which shall cover the prior three calendar years of 2023, 2024, and 2025. (Added by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.

Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2019, ch. 698; Stats. 2021, ch. 723; Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

### **§ 6142 Certificate of Payment**

Upon the payment of the annual license fees, including any costs imposed pursuant to Section 6140.7, and penalties imposed pursuant to Section 6143, each licensee shall receive a certificate issued under the direction of the board evidencing the payment. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 44. Amended by Stats. 1986, ch. 662; Stats. 1988, ch. 1149; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6143 Suspension for Nonpayment and Reinstatement; Penalties**

Any licensee, active or inactive, failing to pay any fees, penalties, or costs after they become due, and after two months written notice of his or her delinquency, shall have his or her license suspended.

The licensee may be reinstated upon the payment of accrued fees or costs and such penalties as may be imposed by the board, not exceeding double the amount of delinquent fees, penalties, or costs. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 46. Amended by Stats. 1986, ch. 662; Stats. 1988, ch. 1149; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6143.5 Licensees Failure to Pay Child Support**

Any licensee, active or inactive, failing to pay any child support after it becomes due shall be subject to Section 17520 of the Family Code. (Added by Stats. 1992, ch. 50. Amended by Stats. 2000, ch. 808; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6144 Disposition of Fees**

(a) All fees shall be paid into the treasury of the State Bar, and, when so paid, shall become part of its funds.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a) and consistent with the reimbursement requirement under Section 6031.5, all fees paid pursuant to Section 6140.02 shall be paid by the State Bar to the Association, and, when paid, shall become part of the funds of the Association. (Origin: State Bar Act, § 46. Amended by Stats. 2017, ch. 422.)

**§ 6144.1 Net Proceeds from Sale or Lease of Real Property Held By State Bar**

(a) The net proceeds from the sale of real property, after payment of obligations and encumbrances and reasonable costs of acquiring and relocating its facilities, if any, shall be held by the State Bar without expenditure or commitment for any purpose until approved by the Legislature by statute. The net proceeds from the lease of real property, after payment of obligations and encumbrances and reasonable costs of acquiring and relocating its facilities, if any, shall be used by the State Bar for the protection of the public.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the net proceeds from the sale of the State Bar's San Francisco office building, after payment of obligations and encumbrances and the minimally reasonable costs of acquiring and relocating its facilities, if any, may be utilized by the State Bar to cover employee salaries, and to cover operational costs associated with the State Bar's discipline system and administration of the biannual admissions exam.

(c) All proceeds expended not consistent with subdivision (b) shall be held by the State Bar without expenditure or commitment for any purpose until approved by the Legislature by statute. (Added by Stats. 2014, ch. 429. Amended by Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2022, ch. 419; Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

**§ 6144.5 Annual License Fees Augmentation—Legislative Intent**

It is the intent of the Legislature to confirm, validate, and declare effective the annual license fees, and all augmentations, including, but not limited to, those made under Sections 6140.3 and 6140.6, fixed and collected by the board for 1990, and all other acts arising from and related thereto. (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 1639. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6145 Annual Financial Statement; Bi-Annual Performance Audit; Bar Exam Audit**

(a) The board shall engage the services of an independent national or regional public accounting firm with at least five years of experience in governmental auditing for an audit of its financial statement for each fiscal year. The financial statement shall be promptly certified under oath by the chief financial officer of the State Bar, and a copy of the audit and financial statement shall be submitted annually, on or before May

31, to the board, to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary.

The audit also shall examine the receipts and expenditures of the State Bar to ensure that the funds collected on behalf of the Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations as the independent successor entity to the former Conference of Delegates of the State Bar are conveyed to that entity, that the State Bar has been paid or reimbursed for the full cost of any administrative and support services provided to the successor entity, including the collection of fees or donations on its behalf, and that no mandatory fees are being used to fund the activities of the successor entity.

In selecting the accounting firm, the board shall consider the value of continuity, along with the risk that continued long-term engagements of an accounting firm may affect the independence of that firm.

(b) The board shall contract with the California State Auditor's Office to conduct a performance audit of the State Bar's operations from July 1, 2000, to December 31, 2000, inclusive. A copy of the performance audit shall be submitted by May 1, 2001, to the board, to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary.

Every two years thereafter, the board shall contract with the California State Auditor's Office to conduct a performance audit of the State Bar's operations for the respective fiscal year, commencing with January 1, 2002, to December 31, 2002, inclusive. A copy of the performance audit shall be submitted within 120 days of the close of the fiscal year for which the audit was performed to the board, to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary.

For the purposes of this subdivision, the California State Auditor's Office may contract with a third party to conduct the performance audit. This subdivision is not intended to reduce the number of audits the California State Auditor's Office may otherwise be able to conduct.

(c) (1) For the 2023 audit required pursuant to subdivision (b), the California State Auditor's Office shall conduct a performance audit of the State Bar as set forth in this subdivision. The State Bar shall provide technical assistance, data, or information as requested by the California State Auditor. It is the intent of the Legislature that this audit may be

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reviewed in conjunction with the legislation that authorizes the State Bar's licensing fee in 2023.

(2) The audit shall evaluate each program or division of the State Bar receiving support from the annual State Bar licensing fees and other fees required of active and inactive licensees.

(3) The audit shall, at minimum, include all of the following for each program or division described by paragraph (2):

(A) An assessment of how much fee revenue, staff, and resources are currently budgeted and subsequently expended to perform existing tasks and responsibilities.

(B) An assessment of whether the State Bar has appropriate program performance measures in place and how these measures are used for budgeting purposes.

(C) An assessment of the usage of any real property sold by the State Bar.

(D) A review of the State Bar's cost allocation plan used to allocate administrative costs.

(E) A review of any proposals for additional funding or resources requested by the State Bar to determine whether these proposals are necessary to meet the State Bar's public protection function, as well as the accuracy of identified associated funding needs, after reviewing how existing resources are used.

(F) A calculation of how much fee revenue would be needed from each State Bar active and inactive licensee to fully offset State Bar costs to perform existing tasks and responsibilities and to support additional proposed expenditures determined to be necessary to meet the State Bar's public protection function. This calculation shall take into account any proposed business process reengineering, reallocations, or efficiencies identified by the California State Auditor.

(4) The audit shall include an evaluation of how the State Bar administers discipline cases that require an outside investigator or prosecutor and how that process can be improved, including the

cost-effectiveness and timeliness of such investigations and prosecutions.

(5) The audit required by this subdivision shall be submitted by April 15, 2023, to the board of trustees, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary.

(6) The State Bar shall use existing resources to reimburse the California State Auditor's Office for the costs of conducting the audit required by this subdivision.

(d) (1) The California State Auditor shall conduct an audit of the February 2025 bar exam to evaluate the administration of the February 2025 bar exam and how the problems with the exam occurred.

(2) The audit required by this subdivision shall do all of the following:

(A) Evaluate the bidding and contracting process that the State Bar engaged in that led to awarding the contract to Proctor U, Inc., doing business as Meazure Learning, as well as the final terms of the contract, and determine the following:

(i) Whether the process was conducted according to existing laws, regulations, and policies.

(ii) What evaluation criteria were used to determine whether Meazure Learning had experience with, and was capable of, conducting an examination similar to the State Bar examination.

(iii) Whether the State Bar appropriately evaluated and authorized any changes, including cost changes, to the executed contract.

(iv) Whether there were appropriate protections from, and evaluations of, any potential conflicts of interest that may have existed between relevant staff at the State Bar and Meazure Learning.

(B) Evaluate the bidding and contracting process that the State Bar engaged in that led to awarding the contract to Kaplan, Inc. for administration of the State Bar examination

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multiple choice questions, as well as the final terms of the contract for those services, and determine all of the following:

- (i) Whether the processes were conducted according to existing laws, regulations, and policies.
- (ii) What evaluation criteria was used to determine whether Kaplan, Inc. had experience with, and was capable of, creating relevant and appropriate questions similar to existing comparable entities like the National Conference of Bar Examiners.
- (iii) Whether the terms of the contract allowed for oversight and monitoring of the question development process, and whether the State Bar appropriately utilized its oversight and monitoring to ensure that sufficient processes were engaged in to develop questions, ensure accuracy, and ensure fairness in the question development.
- (iv) Why Kaplan, Inc. provided 100 multiple choice questions for the February 2025 bar exam, instead of 200.

(C) Evaluate the process that the State Bar engaged in leading up to the administration of the February 2025 State Bar examination to ensure that the examination was conducted in a way that allowed participants to engage fairly in the examination process, and determine all of the following:

- (i) When and how the State Bar became aware of any potential problems with the administration of the examination, including limits or problems with examination locations, and how those potential problems were addressed.
- (ii) How the process for remote examination employed for the February 2025 State Bar examination differed from the processes used for remote examination during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the reasons for those differences.

(iii) The process and reasoning for determining that a makeup examination date should be offered, and the timeline for making that determination.

(iv) The process for determining what specific equipment would be permitted for test-takers, such as white boards, and the reasoning and processes utilized to make any changes to those requirements leading up to the examination date.

(D) Evaluate the events that led the State Bar to use artificial intelligence to create multiple choice questions for use on the February 2025 State Bar examination, including all of the following:

- (i) When the decision was made.
- (ii) Who or what department made the decision.
- (iii) The rationale for making the decision.
- (iv) When executive leadership at the State Bar knew that artificial intelligence was used to create questions for the February 2025 State Bar examination.
- (v) What evaluation criteria were used to ensure that the questions were correct and appropriate for use on the February 2025 State Bar examination.
- (vi) What deficiencies in oversight by executive leadership at the Office of Admissions existed, if any, and how have any such deficiencies been remedied.

(E) (i) Itemize the State Bar costs arising from administration of the February 2025 State Bar examination, including, but not limited to, costs arising from existing contracts, legal representation, remedies provided to takers of the February 2025 State Bar examination, and any other associated costs. The costs itemized in this clause should include money already spent, money the State Bar is legally obligated to spend

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going forward, and other anticipated costs.

(ii) Identify how much money the State Bar claimed it would save by using the February 2025 State Bar examination format and compare that amount to the total of the costs itemized pursuant to clause (i).

(3) The audit required by this subdivision shall be submitted as soon as possible to the board of trustees, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and to the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary pursuant to Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(4) Notwithstanding Section 8544.5 of the Government Code or any other law, the costs of conducting the audit required by this subdivision shall not be paid from the State Audit Fund. The State Bar shall use existing resources to provide the California State Auditor with the funding necessary to cover the costs of the audit. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 342. Amended by Stats. 2002, ch. 415, effective September 9, 2002; Stats. 2003, ch. 334; Stats. 2006, ch. 15; Stats. 2007, ch. 130; Stats. 2012, ch. 281; Stats. 2015, ch. 537; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2021, ch. 723; Stats. 2022, ch. 419; Stats. 2023, ch. 697; Stats. 2025, ch. 209.)

### **§ 6145.1 Report on fee increase; assessment of programs; progress report on processing standards**

(a) (1) The California State Bar shall prepare a report providing written justification for how it would use revenue generated by an increase in the mandatory annual license fee authorized by Section 6140 for active licensees and Section 6141 for inactive licensees. It is the intent of the Legislature to review this report in conjunction with legislation authorizing the State Bar's licensing fee in 2025.

(2) This report shall include the State Bar's calculation of the necessary fee increase to maintain its existing operations and service levels and provide clear justification for any differences from the amounts calculated by the California State Auditor in its April 2023 audit.

(3) This report shall also include the State Bar's assessment of all programs and activities that require additional support from the annual license fee. For each program and activity, this assessment shall include all of the following:

(A) A detailed description of the program and activity.

(B) The projected, budgeted, and actual expenditures in 2023, 2024, and 2025 assuming no increase in the annual fee.

(C) The estimated deficit and the reason for the deficit.

(D) What aspects of the programs or activities would not be achievable if a fee increase was not provided.

(E) Complete, actual data for 2023.

(4) This report shall also include information on how the State Bar proposes to use any potential additional funding resulting from any potential increase in the mandatory annual license fee. Specifically, for every twenty-five-dollar (\$25) incremental increase in the mandatory annual license fee for active licensees and corresponding six dollars and twenty-five-cent (\$6.25) incremental increase in the mandatory annual license fee for inactive licenses the State Bar shall report, at a minimum, the following:

(A) The total amount of revenue estimated to be generated from the incremental increase.

(B) A description of which State Bar programs and activities would be funded by the revenue generated from the incremental increase and any recent major operational or procedural changes implemented in those programs and activities.

(C) In cases where a program or activity identified pursuant to paragraph (3) is proposed to receive funding, detailed justification for the amount of funding proposed to be used to support the program or activity, how that amount was calculated along with any key assumptions made, what outcomes are expected to be achieved, and what, if any, deficit would remain for the

activity or program along with what aspects of the activity or program would be unachievable due to the deficit. This justification shall also clearly specify the extent to which the funding is or will be used to complete business process reengineering, improve processes, or improve efficiencies.

(5) The information provided pursuant to paragraph (4) shall reflect the State Bar's actual planned use of the funding for each potential incremental increase and the State Bar shall not assume that it may redirect the funding for other purposes should an increase in the annual fee be approved.

(6) This report shall be submitted no later than April 1, 2024, to the board of trustees, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the Assembly and Senate Committees on Judiciary.

(b) In addition to the report required by subdivision (a), the State Bar shall provide a progress report on the Office of Chief Trial Counsel's case processing standards, which shall be submitted pursuant to paragraph (6) of subdivision (a). This progress report shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

(1) The status of changes made to case disciplinary processes and an assessment of how those changes are impacting case processing times.

(2) A discussion of how concerns related to operational efficiency raised by the California State Auditor and the Legislative Analyst's Office have been addressed or are planned to be addressed.

(3) An assessment of how recent case processing times compare to the State Bar's proposed average case processing standards. This assessment shall also include data on the timeliness of the completion of the hearing stage in order to provide a comprehensive picture of case processing times.

(4) An assessment of how recent case processing times compare to the State Bar's proposed backlog standards, as well as the proposed standards calculated using pending rather than closed workload as discussed by the Legislative Analyst's January 2023 report. (Added by Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

## ARTICLE 8.5 FEE AGREEMENTS

### § 6146 Limitations; Periodic Payments; Definitions

(a) An attorney shall not contract for or collect a contingency fee for representing any person seeking damages in connection with an action for injury or damage against a health care provider based upon such person's alleged professional negligence in excess of the following limits:

(1) Twenty-five percent of the dollar amount recovered if the recovery is pursuant to settlement agreement and release of all claims executed by all parties thereto prior to a civil complaint or demand for arbitration being filed.

(2) Thirty-three percent of the dollar amount recovered if the recovery is pursuant to settlement, arbitration, or judgment after a civil complaint or demand for arbitration is filed.

(3) If an action is tried in a civil court or arbitrated, the attorney representing the plaintiff or claimant may file a motion with the court or arbitrator for a contingency fee in excess of the percentage stated in paragraph (2), which motion shall be filed and served on all parties to the action and decided in the court's discretion based on evidence establishing good cause for the higher contingency fee.

The limitations shall apply regardless of whether the recovery is by settlement, arbitration, or judgment, or whether the person for whom the recovery is made is a responsible adult, an infant, or a person of unsound mind.

(b) If periodic payments are awarded to the plaintiff pursuant to Section 667.7 of the Code of Civil Procedure, the court shall place a total value on these payments based upon the projected life expectancy of the plaintiff and include this amount in computing the total award from which attorney's fees are calculated under this section.

(c) For purposes of this section:

(1) "Recovered" means the net sum recovered after deducting any disbursements or costs incurred in connection with prosecution or

settlement of the claim. Costs of medical care incurred by the plaintiff and the attorney's office-overhead costs or charges are not deductible disbursements or costs for such purpose.

(2) "Health care provider" means any person licensed or certified pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 500), or licensed pursuant to the Osteopathic Initiative Act, or the Chiropractic Initiative Act, or licensed pursuant to Chapter 2.5 (commencing with Section 1440) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code; and any clinic, health dispensary, or health facility, licensed pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 1200) of the Health and Safety Code. "Health care provider" includes the legal representatives of a health care provider.

(3) "Professional negligence" is a negligent act or omission to act by a health care provider in the rendering of professional services, which act or omission is the proximate cause of a personal injury or wrongful death, provided that the services are within the scope of services for which the provider is licensed and which are not within any restriction imposed by the licensing agency or licensed hospital. (Added by Stats. 1975, 2nd Ex. Sess., ch. 1; Amended by Stats. 1975, 2nd Ex. Sess., ch. 2, effective September 24, 1975, operative December 12, 1975; Stats. 1981, ch. 714; Stats. 1987, ch. 1498; Stats. 2022, ch. 17.)

**§ 6147 Contingency Fee Contract: Contents; Effect of Noncompliance; Application to Contracts for Recovery of Workers' Compensation Benefits**

(a) An attorney who contracts to represent a client on a contingency fee basis shall, at the time the contract is entered into, provide a duplicate copy of the contract, signed by both the attorney and the client, or the client's guardian or representative, to the plaintiff, or to the client's guardian or representative. The contract shall be in writing and shall include, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- (1) A statement of the contingency fee rate that the client and attorney have agreed upon.
- (2) A statement as to how disbursements and costs incurred in connection with the prosecution or settlement of the claim will affect the contingency fee and the client's recovery.

(3) A statement as to what extent, if any, the client could be required to pay any compensation to the attorney for related matters that arise out of their relationship not covered by their contingency fee contract. This may include any amounts collected for the plaintiff by the attorney.

(4) Unless the claim is subject to the provisions of Section 6146, a statement that the fee is not set by law but is negotiable between attorney and client.

(5) If the claim is subject to the provisions of Section 6146, a statement that the rates set forth in that section are the maximum limits for the contingency fee agreement, and that the attorney and client may negotiate a lower rate.

(b) Failure to comply with any provision of this section renders the agreement voidable at the option of the plaintiff, and the attorney shall thereupon be entitled to collect a reasonable fee.

(c) This section shall not apply to contingency fee contracts for the recovery of workers' compensation benefits.

(d) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2000. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 982. Amended by Stats. 1994, ch. 479; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104, operative January 1, 2000.)

**§ 6147.5 Contingency Fee Contracts; Recovery of Claims between Merchants**

(a) Sections 6147 and 6148 shall not apply to contingency fee contracts for the recovery of claims between merchants as defined in Section 2104 of the Commercial Code, arising from the sale or lease of goods or services rendered, or money loaned for use, in the conduct of a business or profession if the merchant contracting for legal services employs 10 or more individuals.

(b) (1) In the instances in which no written contract for legal services exists as permitted by subdivision (a), an attorney shall not contract for or collect a contingency fee in excess of the following limits:

- (A) Twenty percent of the first three hundred dollars (\$300) collected.

(B) Eighteen percent of the next one thousand seven hundred dollars (\$1,700) collected.

(C) Thirteen percent of sums collected in excess of two thousand dollars (\$2,000).

(2) However, the following minimum charges may be charged and collected:

(A) Twenty-five dollars (\$25) in collections of seventy-five dollars (\$75) to one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125).

(B) Thirty-three and one-third percent of collections less than seventy-five dollars (\$75). (Added by Stats. 1990, ch. 713.)

**§ 6148 Written Fee Contract: Contents; Effect of Noncompliance**

(a) In any case not coming within Section 6147 in which it is reasonably foreseeable that total expense to a client, including attorney fees, will exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000), the contract for services in the case shall be in writing. At the time the contract is entered into, the attorney shall provide a duplicate copy of the contract signed by both the attorney and the client, or the client's guardian or representative, to the client or to the client's guardian or representative. The written contract shall contain all of the following:

(1) Any basis of compensation including, but not limited to, hourly rates, statutory fees or flat fees, and other standard rates, fees, and charges applicable to the case.

(2) The general nature of the legal services to be provided to the client.

(3) The respective responsibilities of the attorney and the client as to the performance of the contract.

(b) All bills rendered by an attorney to a client shall clearly state the basis thereof. Bills for the fee portion of the bill shall include the amount, rate, basis for calculation, or other method of determination of the attorney's fees and costs. Bills for the cost and expense portion of the bill shall clearly identify the costs and expenses incurred and the amount of the costs and expenses. Upon request by the client, the attorney shall provide a bill to the client no later than 10 days following

the request unless the attorney has provided a bill to the client within 31 days prior to the request, in which case the attorney may provide a bill to the client no later than 31 days following the date the most recent bill was provided. The client is entitled to make similar requests at intervals of no less than 30 days following the initial request. In providing responses to client requests for billing information, the attorney may use billing data that is currently effective on the date of the request, or, if any fees or costs to that date cannot be accurately determined, they shall be described and estimated.

(c) Failure to comply with any provision of this section renders the agreement voidable at the option of the client, and the attorney shall, upon the agreement being voided, be entitled to collect a reasonable fee.

(d) This section shall not apply to any of the following:

(1) Services rendered in an emergency to avoid foreseeable prejudice to the rights or interests of the client or where a writing is otherwise impractical.

(2) An arrangement as to the fee implied by the fact that the attorney's services are of the same general kind as previously rendered to and paid for by the client.

(3) If the client knowingly states in writing, after full disclosure of this section, that a writing concerning fees is not required.

(4) If the client is a corporation.

(e) This section applies prospectively only to fee agreements following its operative date.

(f) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2000. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 982. Amended by Stats. 1994, ch. 479; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104, operative January 1, 2000.)

**§ 6149 Written Fee Contract Confidential Communication**

A written fee contract shall be deemed to be a confidential communication within the meaning of subdivision (e) of Section 6068 and of Section 952 of the Evidence Code. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475.)

**§ 6149.5 Insurer Notification to Claimant of Settlement Payment Delivered to Claimant's Attorney**

(a) Upon the payment of one hundred dollars (\$100) or more in settlement of any third-party liability claim the insurer shall provide written notice to the claimant if both of the following apply:

- (1) The claimant is a natural person.
- (2) The payment is delivered to the claimant's lawyer or other representative by draft, check, or otherwise.

(b) For purposes of this section, "written notice" includes providing to the claimant a copy of the cover letter sent to the claimant's attorney or other representative that accompanied the settlement payment.

(c) This section shall not create any cause of action for any person against the insurer based upon the insurer's failure to provide the notice to a claimant required by this section. This section shall not create a defense for any party to any cause of action based upon the insurer's failure to provide this notice. (Added by Stats. 1994, ch. 479.)

**ARTICLE 9  
UNLAWFUL SOLICITATION**

**§ 6150 Relation of Article to Chapter**

This article is a part of Chapter 4 of this division of the Business and Professions Code, but the phrase "this chapter" as used in Chapter 4 does not apply to the provisions of this article unless expressly made applicable. (Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34.)

**§ 6151 Runners and Cappers—Definitions**

As used in this article:

(a) A runner or capper is any person, firm, association or corporation acting for consideration in any manner or in any capacity as an agent for an attorney at law or law firm, whether the attorney or any member of the law firm is admitted in California or any other jurisdiction, in the solicitation or procurement of business for the attorney at law or law firm as provided in this article.

(b) An agent is one who represents another in dealings with one or more third persons. (Origin: Stats 1931, ch. 1043; Deering's Gen. Laws (1937), Act 592, § 5. Amended by Stats. 1963, ch. 206; Stats. 1991, ch. 116.)

**§ 6152 Prohibition of Solicitation**

(a) It is unlawful for:

(1) Any person, in an individual capacity or in a capacity as a public or private employee, or for any firm, corporation, partnership or association to act as a runner or capper for any attorneys or to solicit any business for any attorneys in and about the state prisons, county jails, city jails, city prisons, or other places of detention of persons, city receiving hospitals, city and county receiving hospitals, county hospitals, superior courts, or in any public institution or in any public place or upon any public street or highway or in and about private hospitals, sanitariums or in and about any private institution or upon private property of any character whatsoever.

(2) Any person to solicit another person to commit or join in the commission of a violation of subdivision (a).

(b) A general release from a liability claim obtained from any person during the period of the first physical confinement, whether as an inpatient or outpatient, in a clinic or health facility, as defined in Sections 1203 and 1250 of the Health and Safety Code, as a result of the injury alleged to have given rise to the claim and primarily for treatment of the injury, is presumed fraudulent if the release is executed within 15 days after the commencement of confinement or prior to release from confinement, whichever occurs first.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the recommendation of professional employment where that recommendation is not prohibited by the Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of California.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to mean that a public defender or assigned counsel may not make known his or her services as a criminal defense attorney to persons unable to afford legal counsel whether those persons are in custody or otherwise. (Origin: Statutes of 1931, ch. 1043. Added by Stats. 1939, ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1963, ch. 206; Stats. 1976, ch. 1016; Stats. 1977,

ch. 799, effective September 14, 1977; Stats. 1998, ch. 931; Stats. 2002, ch. 784.)

**§ 6153 Violation as Misdemeanor; Forfeiture of Public Office or Employment**

(a) A person, firm, partnership, association, or corporation violating subdivision (a) of Section 6152 is punishable, upon a first conviction, by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year or by a fine not exceeding fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000), or by both that imprisonment and fine. Upon a second or subsequent conviction, a person, firm, partnership, association, or corporation is punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year, or by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170 of the Penal Code for two, three, or four years, or by a fine not exceeding fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000), or by both that imprisonment and fine.

(b) A person employed either as an officer, director, trustee, clerk, servant or agent of this state or of any county or other municipal corporation or subdivision thereof, who is found guilty of violating any of the provisions of this article, shall forfeit the right to their office and employment in addition to any other penalty provided in this article.

(c) Any person may bring a civil action for a violation of subdivision (a) of Section 6152 for the following remedies:

(1) Statutory damages of a minimum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) up to a maximum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per violation, or three times the amount of actual damages, whichever is larger. The amount of statutory damages in this subdivision shall be determined pursuant to subdivision (d).

(2) Attorney's fees.

(3) Injunctive or declaratory relief.

(4) Any other relief the court deems proper.

(d) In assessing the amount of statutory damages, the court shall consider any one or more of the relevant circumstances presented by the case, including, but not limited to, the nature and seriousness of the misconduct, the number of violations, the persistence of the misconduct, the length of time over which the misconduct occurred, the willfulness of the defendant's

misconduct, and the defendant's assets, liabilities, and net worth.

(e) The right of action under this section exists independently of any enforcement action or inaction by any governmental agency or official. (Origin: Statutes of 1931, ch. 1043. Amended by Stats. 1976, ch. 1016; Stats. 1976, ch. 1125; Stats. 1977, ch. 799, effective September 14, 1977; Stats. 1991, ch. 116; Stats. 2000, ch. 867; Stats. 2011, ch. 15, effective Apr. 4, 2011, operative Oct. 1, 2011; Stats. 2025, ch. 645.)

**§ 6154 Invalidity of Contract for Services**

(a) Any contract for professional services secured by any attorney at law or law firm in this state through the services of a runner or capper is void. In any action against any attorney or law firm under the Unfair Practices Act, Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 17000) of Division 7, or Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 17200) of Division 7, any judgment shall include an order divesting the attorney or law firm of any fees and other compensation received pursuant to any such void contract. Those fees and compensation shall be recoverable as additional civil penalties under Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 17000) or Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 17200) of Division 7.

(b) Notwithstanding Section 17206 or any other provision of law, any fees recovered pursuant to subdivision (a) in an action involving professional services related to the provision of workers' compensation shall be allocated as follows: if the action is brought by the Attorney General, one-half of the penalty collected shall be paid to the State General Fund, and one-half of the penalty collected shall be paid to the Workers' Compensation Fraud Account in the Insurance Fund; if the action is brought by a district attorney, one-half of the penalty collected shall be paid to the treasurer of the county in which the judgment was entered, and one-half of the penalty collected shall be paid to the Workers' Compensation Fraud Account in the Insurance Fund; if the action is brought by a city attorney or city prosecutor, one-half of the penalty collected shall be paid to the treasurer of the city in which the judgment was entered, and one-half of the penalty collected shall be paid to the Workers' Compensation Fraud Account in the Insurance Fund. Moneys deposited into the Workers' Compensation Fraud Account pursuant to this subdivision shall be used in the investigation and prosecution of workers' compensation fraud, as appropriated by the Legislature. (Added by Stats. 1939,

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ch. 34. Amended by Stats. 1991, ch. 116, Stats. 1993, ch. 120.)

### **§ 6155 Lawyer Referral Service—Ownership, Operation; Formulation and Enforcement of Rules and Regulations; Fees**

(a) An individual, partnership, corporation, association, or any other nongovernmental entity shall not operate for the direct or indirect purpose, in whole or in part, of referring potential clients to attorneys, and no attorney shall accept a referral of such potential clients, unless all of the following requirements are met:

(1) The service is certified by the State Bar of California and is operated in conformity with minimum standards for a lawyer referral service established by the State Bar and approved by the Supreme Court.

(2) The combined charges to the potential client by the referral service and the attorney to whom the potential client is referred do not exceed the total cost that the client would normally pay if no referral service were involved.

(b) A referral service shall not be owned or operated, in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, by those lawyers to whom, individually or collectively, more than 20 percent of referrals are made. For purposes of this subdivision, a referral service that is owned or operated by a bar association, as defined in the minimum standards, shall be deemed to be owned or operated by its governing committee so long as the governing committee is constituted and functions in the manner prescribed by the minimum standards.

(c) None of the following is a lawyer referral service:

(1) A plan of legal insurance as defined in Section 119.6 of the Insurance Code.

(2) A group or prepaid legal plan, whether operated by a union, trust, mutual benefit or aid association, public or private corporation, or other entity or person, which meets both of the following conditions:

(A) It recommends, furnishes, or pays for legal services to its members or beneficiaries.

(B) It provides telephone advice or personal consultation.

(3) A program having as its purpose the referral of clients to attorneys for representation on a pro bono basis.

(4) A nonprofit organization that partners with a referral service as provided in this article.

(d) The following are in the public interest and do not constitute an unlawful restraint of trade or commerce:

(1) An agreement between a referral service and a participating attorney to eliminate or restrict the attorney's fee for an initial office consultation for each potential client or to provide free or reduced fee services.

(2) Requirements by a referral service that attorneys meet reasonable participation requirements, including experience, education, and training requirements.

(3) Provisions of the minimum standards as approved by the Supreme Court.

(4) Requirements that the application and renewal fees for certification as a lawyer referral service be determined, in whole or in part, by a consideration of any combination of the following factors: a referral service's gross annual revenues, number of panels, number of panel members, amount of fees charged to panel members, or for-profit or nonprofit status; provided that the application and renewal fees are reasonable and necessary to cover the cost of the program and established by the State Bar through the rulemaking process.

(5) Requirements that, to increase access to the justice system for all Californians, lawyer referral services establish separate ongoing activities or arrangements that serve persons of limited means.

(6) Partnerships or agreements between a referral service and a participant's nonprofit organization to refer potential clients for assistance.

(e) With the approval of the Supreme Court, the State Bar shall formulate and enforce rules and regulations

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for carrying out this section, including rules and regulations which do the following:

- (1) Establish minimum standards for lawyer referral services.
  - (2) Require that an entity seeking to qualify as a lawyer referral service register with the State Bar and obtain certification from the State Bar.
  - (3) Require that the certificate may be obtained, maintained, suspended, or revoked pursuant to procedures set forth in the rules and regulations.
  - (4) Require the lawyer referral service to pay an application and renewal fee for the certificate in such reasonable amounts as may be determined by the State Bar. The State Bar shall adopt rules authorizing the waiver or reduction of the fees upon a demonstration of financial necessity. The State Bar may require that the application and renewal fees for certification as a lawyer referral service be determined, in whole or in part, by a consideration of any combination of the following factors: a referral service's gross annual revenues, number of panels, number of panel members, amount of fees charged to panel members, or for-profit or nonprofit status.
  - (5) Require that, to increase access to the justice system for all Californians, lawyer referral services establish separate ongoing activities or arrangements that serve persons of limited means.
  - (6) Require each lawyer who is a member of a certified lawyer referral service to comply with all applicable professional standards, rules, and regulations, and to possess a policy of errors and omissions insurance in an amount not less than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for each occurrence and three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) aggregate, per year. By rule, the State Bar may provide for alternative proof of financial responsibility to meet this requirement.
  - (7) Establish minimum standards for nonprofit organizations that partner with lawyer referral services.
- (f) Provide that cause for denial of certification or recertification or revocation of certification of a lawyer referral service shall include, but not be limited to:
- (1) Noncompliance with the statutes or minimum standards governing lawyer referral services as adopted and from time to time amended.
  - (2) Sharing common or cross ownership, interests, or operations with any entity which engages in referrals to licensed or unlicensed health care providers.
  - (3) Direct or indirect consideration regarding referrals between an owner, operator, or member of a lawyer referral service and any licensed or unlicensed health care provider.
  - (4) Advertising on behalf of attorneys in violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct or the Business and Professions Code.
- (g) This section shall not be construed to prohibit attorneys from jointly advertising their services.
- (1) Permissible joint advertising, among other things, satisfies both of the following:
    - (A) The advertisement identifies by name the advertising attorneys or law firms whom the consumer of legal services may select and initiate contact with.
    - (B) Each participating attorney or law firm shall have executed a joint advertising agreement with the entity managing the joint advertising agreement with the entity managing the joint advertising services, under which the attorney or law firm expressly takes liability for the content of the advertising.
  - (2) Certifiable referral activity involves, among other things, some person or entity other than the consumer and advertising attorney or law firms which, in person, electronically, or otherwise, refers the consumer to an attorney or law firm not identified in the advertising.
- (h) A lawyer referral service certified under this section and operating in full compliance with this section, and in full compliance with the minimum standards and the rules and regulations of the State Bar governing lawyer referral services, shall not be deemed to be in violation of Section 3215 of the Labor Code or Section 750 of the Insurance Code.

(i) The payment by an attorney or law firm member of a certified referral service of the normal fees of that service shall not be deemed to be in violation of Section 3215 of the Labor Code or Section 750 of the Insurance Code, provided that the attorney or law firm member is in full compliance with the minimum standards and the rules and regulations of the State Bar governing lawyer referral services.

(j) Certifications of lawyer referral services issued by the State Bar shall not be transferable. (Added by Stats. 1987, ch. 727; Amended by Stats. 1992, ch. 150; Stats. 1994, ch. 711; Stats. 2024, ch. 227; Stats. 2025, ch. 645.)

**§ 6155.1 Violation of Section 6155; Civil Penalty**

(a) Any individual, partnership, association, corporation, or other entity, including, but not limited to, any person or entity having an ownership interest in a lawyer referral service, that engages, has engaged, or proposes to engage in violations of Section 6155, shall be liable for a civil penalty as defined in Sections 17206, 17206.1, and 17536, respectively, which shall be assessed and recovered in a civil action brought:

(1) In the manner specified in subdivision (a) of Section 17206 or Section 17536.

(2) By the State Bar of California.

(b) If the action is brought pursuant to subdivision (a), the court shall determine the reasonable expenses, if any, incurred by the State Bar in its investigation and prosecution of the action. In these cases, before any penalty collected is paid out pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 17206 or Section 17536, the amount of the reasonable expenses incurred by the State Bar shall be paid to the State Bar and shall be deposited and used as provided in subdivision (c).

(c) If the action is brought pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (a), the civil penalty shall be paid to the State Bar and shall be deposited into a special fund to be used first for the investigation and prosecution of other such cases by the State Bar, with any excess to be used for the investigation and prosecution of attorney discipline cases. (Formerly § 6156, added by Stats. 1994, ch. 711. Amended by Stats. 2006, ch. 538. Renumbered § 6155.1 and amended by Stats. 2025, ch. 565.)

**§ 6156 Civil Actions and Remedies for Violations of Legal Fee-sharing Restrictions**

(a) No attorney licensed or otherwise authorized to practice in this state shall share legal fees directly or indirectly with an out-of-state alternative business structure unless all of the following apply:

(1) The attorney is also licensed in the state in which the alternative business structure is approved.

(2) The fees are compensation for the provision of legal services in that state.

(3) The law of that state is controlling pursuant to Rule 8.5 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct or any successor rule.

(b) A violation of this section shall constitute cause for the imposition of discipline by the State Bar of California and shall subject the attorney to the following penalties:

(1) Statutory damages of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) per violation or three times the actual damages incurred by the consumer, whichever is greater.

(2) Attorney's costs and fees.

(3) Injunctive or declaratory relief.

(c) (1) For the purposes of this section, "alternative business structure" means any entity that provides legal services while allowing nonattorney ownership or decisionmaking authority.

(2) For the purposes of this section, "alternative business structure" does not include nonprofit organizations.

(d) This section shall not apply to any arrangement for the sharing of legal fees if both of the following conditions are satisfied:

(1) The arrangement for the sharing of legal fees was ordered or approved by a court or tribunal of competent jurisdiction, including, but not limited to, the establishment or distribution of a common benefit fund in coordinated, consolidated, or multidistrict litigation.

(2) The manner in which the legal fees are to be allocated is subject to judicial or tribunal oversight

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and determined to be fair, reasonable, and necessary for the administration of justice.

(e) This section shall not apply to a contract in which all of the following are satisfied:

(1) The contract outlines a specific dollar amount for services rendered.

(2) No payment is related to the referral of legal services or purchase of a lead for a potential client or case.

(3) No payment is contingent on the amount recovered in a specific case.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed as superseding the holding in *Ridgley v. Lew* 55 F. Supp. 3d 89 (2014).

(g) This section shall only apply to contracts entered into on or after January 1, 2026.

(h) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2030, and as of that date is repealed. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 565.)

### **§ 6156.5 Violations; Private Civil Actions and Remedies**

(a) Any person may bring a civil action for a violation of Section 6155 for the following remedies:

(1) Statutory damages of a minimum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) up to a maximum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per violation or three times the amount of actual damages, whichever is larger. The amount of statutory damages in this subdivision shall be determined pursuant to subdivision (b).

(2) Attorney's fees.

(3) Injunctive or declaratory relief.

(4) Any other relief the court deems proper.

(b) In assessing the amount of statutory damages, the court shall consider any one or more of the relevant circumstances presented by the case, including, but not limited to, the nature and seriousness of the misconduct, the number of violations, the persistence of the misconduct, the length of time over which the misconduct occurred, the willfulness of the defendant's

misconduct, and the defendant's assets, liabilities, and net worth.

(c) The right of action under this section exists independently of any enforcement action or inaction by any governmental agency or official.

(d) This section shall not be construed to prohibit attorneys from jointly advertising their services in compliance with subdivision (g) of Section 6155. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 645.)

## **ARTICLE 9.5 LEGAL ADVERTISING**

### **§ 6157 Definitions**

As used in this article, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Advertise" means to engage in any communication constituting an advertisement.

(b) "Advertisement" means any communication, through any written, recorded, or electronic means, whether available to, or directed generally to, members of the public or to a limited group of individuals, that provides information concerning a lawyer or the lawyer's services for the purpose of encouraging individuals to secure the services of the lawyer or their law firm.

(c) "Electronic medium" means television, radio, or computer networks.

(d) "Lawyer" means a licensee of the State Bar of California or a person who is admitted in good standing and eligible to practice before the bar of any United States court or the highest court of the District of Columbia or any state, territory, or insular possession of the United States, or is licensed to practice law in, or is admitted in good standing and eligible to practice before the bar of the highest court of, a foreign country or any political subdivision thereof, and includes any agent of the lawyer, law firm, or law corporation doing business in the state.

(e) "Licensee" means a licensee in good standing of the State Bar and includes any agent of the licensee and any law firm or law corporation doing business in the State of California. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 518. Amended by Stats. 1994, ch. 711; Stats. 2006, ch. 538; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2025, ch. 645.)

**§ 6157.1 Advertisements—False, Misleading or Deceptive**

No advertisement shall contain any false, misleading, or deceptive statement or omit to state any fact necessary to make the statements made, in light of circumstances under which they are made, not false, misleading, or deceptive. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 518.)

**§ 6157.2 Advertisements—Prohibited Content, Disclosures, and Civil Remedies**

(a) An advertisement shall not contain or refer to any of the following:

- (1) A guarantee or warranty of success regarding the outcome of a legal matter as a result of representation by the licensee.
- (2) Statements or symbols stating that the licensee featured in the advertisement can generally obtain immediate cash or quick settlements.
- (3) (A) An impersonation of the name, voice, photograph, or electronic image of any person other than the lawyer, directly or implicitly purporting to be that of a lawyer.  
  
(B) An impersonation of the name, voice, photograph, or electronic image of any person, directly or implicitly purporting to be a client of the licensee featured in the advertisement, or a dramatization of events, unless disclosure of the impersonation or dramatization is made in the advertisement.  
  
(C) A spokesperson, including a celebrity spokesperson, unless there is disclosure of the spokesperson's title.
- (4) A statement that a licensee offers representation on a contingent basis unless the statement also advises whether a client will be held responsible for any costs advanced by the licensee when no recovery is obtained on behalf of the client. If the client will not be held responsible for costs, no disclosure is required.
- (5) Misleading, deceptive, or false statements, words, or phrases regarding a lawyer's or law firm's skills, experience, or record.

(6) References to a lawyer's or a law firm's recognition by, or awards from, an organization, unless both of the following requirements are met:

- (A) The recognition or award is not conferred by virtue of being a member of the organization.
- (B) The organization does not charge or solicit a fee, cost, or payment for the recognition or award.

(b) An advertisement subject to this chapter shall contain the following information conspicuously displayed, or intelligible, if spoken:

- (1) The name of at least one lawyer licensed to practice law in California, the law firm, the certified lawyer referral service responsible for the advertisement, or the joint advertiser responsible for the advertisement together with the name of each lawyer or law firm participating in the joint advertisement, as required by subdivision (g) of Section 6155.
- (2) Disclosure of the city, town, or county of at least one bona fide office location or the address of record listed with the State Bar for the lawyer or law firm.
- (3) A joint advertisement disseminated by a joint advertiser acting in compliance with subdivision (g) of Section 6155 via a platform or medium that imposes character, display, or time limitations shall be deemed compliant with the disclosure requirement of this subdivision if it contains the name of the joint advertiser responsible for the advertisement and provides a clear and prominent link or direction to a landing page or equivalent resource that includes all disclosures required by this subdivision.

(c) (1) A consumer who was misled by an advertisement in violation of this section may bring a civil action for the remedies provided in paragraph (2) if all of the following requirements are met:

- (A) The consumer files a complaint under subdivision (a) of Section 6158.4.
- (B) The State Bar determines that substantial evidence of a violation exists

pursuant to the process set forth in Section 6158.4.

(C) The advertiser does not withdraw the advertisement as provided in subdivision (a) or (b) of Section 6158.4, or the advertiser withdraws an advertisement upon a State Bar determination that substantial evidence of a violation exists and subsequently rebroadcasts the same advertisement without a finding by the trier of fact in a civil action that the advertisement does not violate this section.

(2) A consumer who satisfies the requirements of paragraph (1) may bring a civil action for the following remedies:

(A) Statutory damages of a minimum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) up to a maximum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per each unique advertisement or three times the amount of actual damages, whichever is larger. The amount of statutory damages in this subdivision may be determined pursuant to subdivision (d).

(B) Attorney's fees.

(C) Injunctive or declaratory relief.

(D) Any other relief the court deems proper.

(d) In assessing the amount of statutory damages, the court may consider any one or more of the relevant circumstances presented by the case, including, but not limited to, the nature and seriousness of the misconduct, the number of violations, the persistence of the misconduct, the length of time over which the misconduct occurred, the willfulness of the defendant's misconduct, and the defendant's assets, liabilities, and net worth.

(e) The right of action under this section exists independently of any enforcement action or inaction by any governmental agency or official.

(f) This section does not restrict any other right available under existing law or otherwise available to a citizen seeking redress for false, misleading, or deceptive advertisements. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 518. Amended by Stats. 1994, ch. 711; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2025, ch. 645.)

### **§ 6157.3 Advertisements—Disclosure of Payor Other Than Licensee**

Any advertisement made on behalf of a licensee, which is not paid for by the licensee, shall disclose any business relationship, past or present, between the licensee and the person paying for the advertisement. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 518. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6157.4 Lawyer Referral Service Advertisements—Necessary Disclosures**

Any advertisement that is created or disseminated by a lawyer referral service shall disclose whether the attorneys on the organization's referral list, panel, or system, paid any consideration, other than a proportional share of actual cost, to be included on that list, panel, or system. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 518.)

### **§ 6157.5 Advertisements—Immigration or Naturalization Legal Services; Disclosures**

(a) All advertisements published, distributed, or broadcasted by or on behalf of a licensee seeking professional employment for the licensee in providing services relating to immigration or naturalization shall include a statement that he or she is an active licensee of the State Bar, licensed to practice law in this state. If the advertisement seeks employment for a law firm or law corporation employing more than one attorney, the advertisement shall include a statement that all the services relating to immigration and naturalization provided by the firm or corporation shall be provided by an active licensee of the State Bar or by a person under the supervision of an active licensee of the State Bar. This subdivision shall not apply to classified or "yellow pages" listings in a telephone or business directory of three lines or less that state only the name, address, and telephone number of the listed entity.

(b) If the advertisement is in a language other than English, the statement required by subdivision (a) shall be in the same language as the advertisement.

(c) This section shall not apply to licensees employed by public agencies or by nonprofit entities registered with the Secretary of State.

(d) A violation of this section by a licensee shall be cause for discipline by the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 2000, ch. 674. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6158 Electronic Media Advertisements; Compliance with Sections 6157.1 and 6157.2; Message May Not Be False, Misleading or Deceptive; Message Must Be Factually Substantiated**

In advertising by electronic media, to comply with Sections 6157.1 and 6157.2, the message as a whole may not be false, misleading, or deceptive, and the message as a whole must be factually substantiated. The message means the effect in combination of the spoken word, sound, background, action, symbols, visual image, or any other technique employed to create the message. Factually substantiated means capable of verification by a credible source. (Added by Stats. 1994, ch. 711.)

**§ 6158.1 Rebuttable Presumptions; False, Misleading or Deceptive Message**

There shall be a rebuttable presumption affecting the burden of producing evidence that the following messages are false, misleading, or deceptive within the meaning of Section 6158:

- (a) A message as to the ultimate result of a specific case or cases presented out of context without adequately providing information as to the facts or law giving rise to the result.
- (b) The depiction of an event through methods such as the use of displays of injuries, accident scenes, or portrayals of other injurious events which may or may not be accompanied by sound effects and which may give rise to a claim for compensation.
- (c) A message referring to or implying money received by or for a client in a particular case or cases, or to potential monetary recovery for a prospective client. A reference to money or monetary recovery includes, but is not limited to, a specific dollar amount, characterization of a sum of money, monetary symbols, or the implication of wealth. (Added by Stats. 1994, ch. 711.)

**§ 6158.2 Presumptions; Information Not False, Misleading or Deceptive**

The following information shall be presumed to be in compliance with this article for purposes of advertising by electronic media, provided the message as a whole is not false, misleading, or deceptive:

- (a) Name, including name of law firm, names of professional associates, addresses, telephone numbers, and the designation "lawyer," "attorney," "law firm," or the like.
- (b) Fields of practice, limitation of practice, or specialization.
- (c) Fees for routine legal services, subject to the requirements of subdivision (d) of Section 6157.2 and the Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (d) Date and place of birth.
- (e) Date and place of admission to the bar of state and federal courts.
- (f) Schools attended, with dates of graduation, degrees, and other scholastic distinctions.
- (g) Public or quasi-public offices.
- (h) Military service.
- (i) Legal authorship.
- (j) Legal teaching positions.
- (k) Memberships, offices, and committee assignments in bar associations.
- (l) Memberships and offices in legal fraternities and legal societies.
- (m) Technical and professional licenses.
- (n) Memberships in scientific, technical, and professional associations and societies.
- (o) Foreign language ability of the advertising lawyer or a member of lawyer's firm. (Added by Stats. 1994, ch. 711)

**§ 6158.3 Portrayal of Result in Particular Case or Cases; Additional Disclosures**

In addition to any disclosure required by Section 6157.2, Section 6157.3, and the Rules of Professional Conduct, the following disclosure shall appear in advertising by electronic media. Use of the following disclosure alone may not rebut any presumption created in Section 6158.1. If an advertisement in the electronic media conveys a message portraying a result in a particular case or cases, the advertisement must state, in either an oral

or printed communication, either of the following disclosures: The advertisement must adequately disclose the factual and legal circumstances that justify the result portrayed in the message, including the basis for liability and the nature of injury or damage sustained, or the advertisement must state that the result portrayed in the advertisement was dependent on the facts of that case, and that the results will differ if based on different facts. (Added by Stats. 1994, ch. 711.)

**§ 6158.4 Enforcement; Complaint Claiming Violation; State Bar Determination; Declaratory Relief; Civil Action for Recovery Paid into Client Security Fund; Award of Attorney's Fees; Records; Unfounded Complaints**

(a) Any person claiming a violation of Section 6157.2, 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3 may file a complaint with the State Bar that states the name of the advertiser, a description of the advertisement claimed to violate these sections, and that specifically identifies the alleged violation. A copy of the complaint shall be personally served simultaneously upon the advertiser. The advertiser shall have nine days from the date of personal service of the complaint to voluntarily withdraw from broadcast the advertisement that is the subject of the complaint. If the advertiser elects to withdraw the advertisement, the advertiser shall notify the State Bar and the complainant of that fact in writing, and no further action may be taken by the complainant, including, but not limited to, seeking remedies pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 6157.2. The advertiser shall provide a copy of the complained of advertisement to the State Bar for review within seven days of service of the complaint. Within 21 days of the delivery of the complained of advertisement, the State Bar shall determine whether substantial evidence of a violation of these sections exists. The review shall be conducted by a State Bar attorney who has expertise in the area of lawyer advertising.

(b) (1) Upon a State Bar determination that substantial evidence of a violation exists, if the licensee or certified lawyer referral service withdraws that advertisement from electronic media within 72 hours, no further action may be taken by the complainant. For any other medium, notice of withdrawal shall be submitted to the State Bar within 72 hours and withdrawal shall occur as soon as practicable but not to exceed 30 days.

(2) Upon a State Bar determination that substantial evidence of a violation exists, if the licensee or certified lawyer referral service fails to withdraw the advertisement as provided in paragraph (1), a civil enforcement action brought pursuant to subdivision (e) for a violation of Section 6157.2, 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3, or brought pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 6157.2 for a violation of Section 6157.2, may be commenced within one year of the State Bar decision. If the licensee or certified lawyer referral service withdraws an advertisement upon a State Bar determination that substantial evidence of a violation exists and subsequently rebroadcasts the same advertisement without a finding by the trier of fact in an action brought pursuant to subdivision (c) or (e), or pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 6157.2, that the advertisement does not violate Section 6157.2, 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3, a civil enforcement action may be commenced within one year of the rebroadcast.

(3) Upon a determination that substantial evidence of a violation does not exist, the complainant is barred from bringing a civil enforcement action pursuant to subdivision (e) of this section or subdivision (c) of Section 6157.2, but may bring an action for declaratory relief pursuant to subdivision (c).

(c) Any licensee or certified lawyer referral service who was the subject of a complaint and any complainant affected by the decision of the State Bar may bring an action for declaratory relief in the superior court to obtain a judicial declaration of whether Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3 has been violated, and, if applicable, may also request injunctive relief. Any defense otherwise available at law may be raised for the first time in the declaratory relief action, including any constitutional challenge. Any civil enforcement action filed pursuant to subdivision (e) shall be stayed pending the resolution of the declaratory relief action. The action shall be defended by the real party in interest. The State Bar shall not be considered a party to the action unless it elects to intervene in the action.

(1) Upon a State Bar determination that substantial evidence of a violation exists, if the complainant or the licensee or certified lawyer referral service brings an action for declaratory relief to obtain a judicial declaration of whether the advertisement violates Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3, and the court declares that the

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advertisement violates one or more of the sections, a civil enforcement action pursuant to subdivision (e) may be filed or maintained if the licensee or certified lawyer referral service failed to withdraw the advertisement within 72 hours of the State Bar determination. The decision of the court that an advertisement violates Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3 shall be binding on the issue of whether the advertisement is unlawful in any pending or prospective civil enforcement action brought pursuant to subdivision (e) if that binding effect is supported by the doctrine of collateral estoppel or res judicata.

If, in that declaratory relief action, the court declares that the advertisement does not violate Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3, the licensee or lawyer referral service may broadcast the advertisement. The decision of the court that an advertisement does not violate Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3 shall bar any pending or prospective civil enforcement action brought pursuant to subdivision (e) if that prohibitive effect is supported by the doctrine of collateral estoppel or res judicata.

(2) If, following a State Bar determination that does not find substantial evidence that an advertisement violates Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3, the complainant or the licensee or certified lawyer referral service brings an action for declaratory relief to obtain a judicial declaration of whether the advertisement violates Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3, and the court declares that the advertisement violates one or more of the sections, a civil enforcement action pursuant to subdivision (e) may be filed or maintained if the licensee or certified lawyer referral service broadcasts the same advertisement following the decision in the declaratory relief action. The decision of the court that an advertisement violates Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3 shall be binding on the issue of whether the advertisement is unlawful in any pending or prospective civil enforcement action brought pursuant to subdivision (e) if that binding effect is supported by the doctrine of collateral estoppel or res judicata.

If, in that declaratory relief action, the court declares that the advertisement does not violate Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3, the licensee or lawyer referral service may continue broadcast of the advertisement. The decision of the court that

an advertisement does not violate Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3 shall bar any pending or prospective civil enforcement action brought pursuant to subdivision (e) if that prohibitive effect is supported by the doctrine of collateral estoppel or res judicata.

(d) The State Bar review procedure shall apply only to licensees, certified referral services, and individuals or entities who participate in joint legal advertising arrangements in compliance with subdivision (g) of Section 6155. A direct civil enforcement action for a violation of Section 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3 may be maintained against any other advertiser after first giving 14 days' notice to the advertiser of the alleged violation. If the advertiser does not withdraw from broadcast the advertisement that is the subject of the notice within 14 days of service of the notice, a civil enforcement action pursuant to subdivision (e) may be commenced. The civil enforcement action shall be commenced within one year of the date of the last publication or broadcast of the advertisement that is the subject of the action.

(e) Subject to Section 6158.5, a violation of Section 6157.2, 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3 shall be cause for a civil enforcement action brought by any person residing within the State of California for an amount up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each individual broadcast that violates Section 6157.2, 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3. Venue shall be in a county where the advertisement was broadcast.

(f) In any civil action brought pursuant to this section, the matter shall be determined according to the law and procedure relating to the trial of civil actions, including trial by jury, if demanded.

(g) The decision of the State Bar pursuant to subdivision (a) shall be admissible in the civil enforcement action brought pursuant to subdivision (e). However, the State Bar shall not be a party or a witness in either a declaratory relief proceeding brought pursuant to subdivision (c) or the civil enforcement action brought pursuant to subdivision (e). Additionally, no direct action may be filed against the State Bar challenging the State Bar's decision pursuant to subdivision (a).

(h) Amounts recovered pursuant to this section shall be paid into the Client Security Fund maintained by the State Bar.

(i) In any civil action brought pursuant to this section, the court shall award attorney's fees pursuant to Section

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1021.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure if the court finds that the action has resulted in the enforcement of an important public interest or that a significant benefit has been conferred on the public.

(j) The State Bar shall maintain records of all complainants and complaints filed pursuant to subdivision (a) for a period of seven years. If a complainant files five or more unfounded complaints within seven years, the complainant shall be considered a vexatious litigant for purposes of this section. The State Bar shall require any person deemed a vexatious litigant to post security in the minimum amount of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) prior to considering any complaint filed by that person and shall refrain from taking any action until the security is posted. In any civil action arising from this section brought by a person deemed a vexatious litigant, the defendant may advise the court and trier of fact that the plaintiff is deemed to be a vexatious litigant under the provisions of this section and disclose the basis for this determination.

(k) Nothing in this section shall restrict any other right available under existing law or otherwise available to a citizen seeking redress for false, misleading, or deceptive advertisements. (Added by Stats. 1994, ch. 711. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2025, ch. 645.)

### **§ 6158.5 Application of Article to Lawyers, Lawyer Referral Services and Others**

(a) This article applies to all lawyers, licensees, law partnerships, law corporations, entities subject to regulation under Section 6155, advertising collectives, cooperatives, or other individuals, including nonlawyers, or groups advertising the availability of legal services.

(b) Subdivisions (a) to (k), inclusive, of Section 6158.4 do not apply to qualified legal services projects as defined in Article 14 (commencing with Section 6210) and nonprofit lawyer referral services certified under Section 6155.

(c) Sections 6157 to 6158.5, inclusive, do not apply to the media in which the advertising is displayed or to an advertising agency that prepares the contents of an advertisement and is not directly involved in the formation or operation of lawyer advertising collectives or cooperatives, referral services, or other groups existing primarily for the purpose of advertising the availability of legal services or making referrals to attorneys.

(d) This article does not apply to broadcasters that disseminate the advertisements subject to this article. (Added by Stats. 1994, ch. 711. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2025, ch. 645.)

### **§ 6158.7 Violation of Section 6157.1, subdivision (a) or (b) of Section 6157.2, or Section 6157.3, 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3—Cause for Discipline**

A violation of Section 6157.1, subdivision (a) or (b) of Section 6157.2, or Section 6157.3, 6158, 6158.1, or 6158.3 by a licensee shall be cause for discipline by the State Bar. In addition to the existing grounds for initiating a disciplinary proceeding set forth in a statute or in the Rules of Professional Conduct, the State Bar may commence an investigation based upon a complaint filed by a person pursuant to Section 6158.4. The State Bar's decision pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 6158.4 shall be admissible, but shall not be determinative, in any disciplinary proceeding brought as a result of that complaint. (Added by Stats. 1994, ch. 711. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2025, ch. 645.)

### **§ 6159 Court Reporting Requirements for Violations**

The court shall report the name, address, and professional license number of any person found in violation of this article to the appropriate professional licensing agency for review and possible disciplinary action. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 518. Amended by Stats. 1994, ch. 711 (previously § 6157.5).)

#### **§ 6159.1 Retention of Advertisement**

A true and correct copy of any advertisement made by a person or licensee shall be retained for one year by the person or licensee who pays for an advertisement soliciting employment of legal services. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 518. Amended by Stats. 1994, ch. 711 (previously § 6157.6); Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### **§ 6159.2 Scope of Article—Provisions Not Exclusive**

(a) Nothing in this article shall be deemed to limit or preclude enforcement of any other provision of law, or of any court rule, or of the State Bar Rules of Professional Conduct.

(b) Nothing in this article shall limit the right of advertising protected under the Constitution of the State of California, or of the United States. If any provision of this article is found to violate either Constitution, that provision is severable and the remaining provisions shall be enforceable without the severed provision. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 518. Amended by Stats. 1994, ch. 711 (previously § 6157.7).)

## ARTICLE 9.6 LEGAL AID ORGANIZATIONS

### § 6159.5 Legal Aid Organizations—Legislative Findings

The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Legal aid programs provide a valuable service to the public by providing free legal services to the poor.

(b) Private, for-profit organizations that have no lawyers have been using the name “legal aid” in order to obtain business from people who believe they are obtaining services from a nonprofit legal aid organization.

(c) Public opinion research has shown that the term “legal aid” is commonly understood by the public to mean free legal assistance for the poor.

(d) Members of the public seeking free legal assistance are often referred by telephone and other directory assistance information providers to for-profit organizations that charge a fee for their services, and there are a large number of listings in many telephone directories for “legal aid” that are not nonprofit but are actually for-profit organizations.

(e) The Los Angeles Superior Court has held that there is a common law trademark on the name “legal aid,” which means legal services for the poor provided by a nonprofit organization.

(f) The public will be benefited if for-profit organizations are prohibited from using the term “legal aid,” in order to avoid confusion. (Added by Stats. 2009, ch. 457.)

### § 6159.51 Legal Aid Organizations—Defined

For purposes of this article, “legal aid organization” means a nonprofit organization that provides civil legal services for the poor without charge. (Added by Stats. 2009, ch. 457.)

### § 6159.52 Legal Aid Organizations—Use of Terms; Prohibitions

It is unlawful for any person or organization to use the term “legal aid,” “legal aide,” or any confusingly similar name in any firm name, trade name, fictitious business name, or any other designation, or on any advertisement, letterhead, business card, or sign, unless the person or organization is a legal aid organization subject to fair use principles for nominative, descriptive, or noncommercial use. (Added by Stats. 2009, ch. 457.)

### § 6159.53 Legal Aid Organizations—Remedies for Violation of Section 6159.52

(a) Any consumer injured by a violation of Section 6159.52 may file a complaint and seek injunctive relief, restitution, and damages in the superior court of any county in which the defendant maintains an office, advertises, or is listed in a telephone directory.

(b) A person who violates Section 6159.52 shall be subject to an injunction against further violation of Section 6159.52 by any legal aid organization that maintains an office in any county in which the defendant maintains an office, advertises, or is listed in a telephone directory. In an action under this subdivision, it is not necessary to allege or prove actual damage to the plaintiff, and irreparable harm and interim harm to the plaintiff shall be presumed.

(c) Reasonable attorney’s fees shall be awarded to the prevailing plaintiff in any action under this section. (Added by Stats. 2009, ch. 457.)

## ARTICLE 10 LAW CORPORATIONS

### § 6160 Nature

A law corporation is a corporation which is registered with the State Bar of California and has a currently

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effective certificate of registration from the State Bar pursuant to the Professional Corporation Act, as contained in Part 4 (commencing with Section 13400) of Division 3 of Title 1 of the Corporations Code, and this article. Subject to all applicable statutes, rules and regulations, such law corporation is entitled to practice law. With respect to a law corporation the governmental agency referred to in the Professional Corporation Act is the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375.)

### **§ 6161 Application for Registration**

An applicant for registration as a law corporation shall supply to the State Bar all necessary and pertinent documents and information requested by the State Bar concerning the applicant's plan of operation, including, but not limited to, a copy of its articles of incorporation, certified by the Secretary of State, a copy of its bylaws, certified by the secretary of the corporation, the name and address of the corporation, the names and addresses of its officers, directors, shareholders, members, if any, and employees who will render professional services, the address of each office, and any fictitious name or names which the corporation intends to use. The State Bar may provide forms of application. If the Board of Trustees or a committee authorized by it finds that the corporation is duly organized and existing or duly qualified for the transaction of intrastate business pursuant to the General Corporation Law, or pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 13406 of the Corporations Code, that each officer (except as provided in Section 13403 of the Corporations Code), director, shareholder (except as provided in subdivision (b) of Section 13406 of the Corporations Code), and each employee who will render professional services is a licensed person as defined in the Professional Corporation Act, or a person licensed to render the same professional services in the jurisdiction or jurisdictions in which the person practices, and that from the application it appears that the affairs of the corporation will be conducted in compliance with law and the rules and regulations of the State Bar, the State Bar shall upon payment of the registration fee in such amount as it may determine issue a certificate of registration. The applicant shall include with the application, for each shareholder of the corporation licensed in a foreign country but not in this state or in any other state, territory, or possession of the United States, a certificate from the authority in the foreign country currently having final jurisdiction over the practice of law, which shall verify the shareholder's admission to practice in the foreign

country, the date thereof, and the fact that the shareholder is currently in good standing as an attorney or counselor at law or the equivalent. If the certificate is not in English, there shall be included with the certificate a duly authenticated English translation thereof. The application shall be signed and verified by an officer of the corporation. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375. Amended by Stats. 1993, ch. 955; Stats. 1994, ch. 479; Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

### **§ 6161.1 Renewal of Registration**

Each law corporation shall renew its certificate of registration annually at a time to be fixed by the State Bar and shall pay a fee therefor which shall be fixed by the State Bar in accordance with subdivision (a) of Section 6163. (Added by Stats. 1985, ch. 465.)

### **§ 6161.2 Payment of Fees; Uses**

All fees for registration and renewal paid pursuant to Sections 6161 and 6161.1 shall be paid into the treasury of the State Bar and shall be used for its regulatory and disciplinary purposes. (Added by Stats. 2010, ch. 2, operative January 25, 2010.)

### **§ 6162 Report of Changes of Personnel, Officers, etc.**

Within such time as the State Bar may by rule provide, the law corporation shall report in writing to the State Bar any change in directors, officers, employees performing professional services and share ownership, and amendments to its articles of incorporation and bylaws. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375.)

### **§ 6163 Annual Report**

(a) Each law corporation shall file with the State Bar annually and at such other times as the State Bar may require a report containing such information pertaining to qualification and compliance with the statutes, rules, and regulations referred to in Section 6127.5 as the State Bar may determine. The fee for filing such a report shall be fixed by the State Bar. All reports shall be signed and verified by an officer of the corporation. The State Bar may fix a penalty for the late filing of an annual report in an amount not to exceed double the amount of the applicable filing fee and may also fix the date upon which the penalty shall attach if the report

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has not been filed and the fee paid prior to that date. The date upon which the penalty shall attach shall be not less than 31 days following the date fixed for filing the report. The filing of the annual report together with the filing fee and any penalty due for late filing constitutes the annual renewal of the certificate of registration. The fee fixed by the board for the filing of the annual report and any penalty due for late filing constitutes the fee required by Section 6161.1 for renewal of the certificate for the year in which the annual report is due to be filed.

(b) The certificate of registration of any law corporation failing to file the annual report, renew its certificate, and pay the fee therefor and any penalty due thereon for late filing, shall be suspended 60 days following written notice of delinquency. The written notice shall be mailed to the corporation at its current office or other address for State Bar purposes, as shown on the law corporation records of the State Bar. The suspension shall be ordered by the chief executive officer of the State Bar or his or her designee.

(c) A certificate of registration suspended pursuant to subdivision (b) may be reinstated upon the filing by the law corporation of all delinquent annual reports and payment of all accrued fees and penalties required by this section and Section 6161.1 which are due on the date of the suspension, and any such fees and penalties which become due on or before the date of the reinstatement. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 465.)

**§ 6164** (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375. Repealed by Stats. 1985, ch. 465.)

### **§ 6165 Licensed Personnel**

Except as provided in Section 13403 and 13406 of the Corporations Code, each director, shareholder, and each officer of a law corporation shall be a licensed person as defined in the Professional Corporation Act, or a person licensed to render the same professional services in the jurisdiction or jurisdictions in which the person practices. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375. Amended by Stats. 1993, ch. 955.)

### **§ 6166 Disqualified Shareholder; Income**

The income of a law corporation attributable to professional services rendered while a shareholder is a

disqualified person (as defined in the Professional Corporation Act) shall not in any manner accrue to the benefit of such shareholder or his shares in the law corporation. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375.)

### **§ 6167 Misconduct**

A law corporation shall not do or fail to do any act the doing of which or the failure to do which would constitute a cause for discipline of a licensee of the State Bar, under any statute, rule, or regulation now or hereafter in effect. In the conduct of its business, it shall observe and be bound by such statutes, rules, and regulations to the same extent as if specifically designated therein as a licensee of the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6168 Investigation of Conduct; Powers**

(a) The State Bar may conduct an investigation of the conduct of the business of a law corporation.

(b) Upon that investigation, the Board of Trustees, or a committee authorized by it, shall have power to issue subpoenas, administer oaths, examine witnesses and compel the production of records, in the same manner as upon an investigation or formal hearing in a disciplinary matter under the State Bar Act. The investigation shall be private and confidential and shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code), except to the extent that disclosure of facts and information may be required if a cease and desist order is thereafter issued and subsequent proceedings are had. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2015, ch. 537; Stats. 2021, ch. 615.)

### **§ 6169 Notice to Show Cause; Hearing; Findings and Recommendations; Review**

(a) When there is reason to believe that a law corporation has violated or is about to violate any of the provisions of this article or the Professional Corporation Act or of any other pertinent statute, rule or regulation, the State Bar may issue a notice directing the corporation to show cause why it should not be ordered to cease and desist from specified acts or conduct or its certificate of registration should not be

suspended or revoked. A copy of the notice shall be served upon the corporation in the manner provided for service of summons upon a California corporation.

(b) A hearing upon the notice to show cause shall be held before a standing or special committee appointed by the board of trustees. Upon the hearing, the State Bar and the corporation shall be entitled to the issue of subpoenas, to be represented by counsel, to present evidence, and examine and cross-examine witnesses.

(c) The hearing committee shall make findings in writing and shall either recommend that the proceeding be dismissed or that a cease and desist order be issued or that the certificate of registration of the corporation be suspended or revoked. The determination may be reviewed by the board of trustees or by a committee authorized by the Board of Trustees to act in its stead, upon written petition for review, filed with the State Bar by the corporation or the State Bar within 20 days after service of the findings and recommendation. Upon review, the board of trustees or the committee may take additional evidence, may adopt new or amended findings, and make such order as may be just, as to the notice to show cause.

(d) Subdivisions (a), (b), and (c) shall not apply to the suspension or revocation of the certificate of registration of a corporation in either of the following cases:

- (1) The death of a sole shareholder, as provided in Section 6171.1.
- (2) Failure to file the annual report and renew the certificate of registration, as provided in Sections 6161.1 and 6163. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 465; Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

#### **§ 6170 Judicial Review**

Any action of the State Bar or the Board of Trustees or a committee of the State Bar, or the chief executive officer of the State Bar or the designee of the chief executive officer, provided for in this article, may be reviewed by the Supreme Court by petition for review pursuant to rules prescribed by the Supreme Court. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 465; Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

#### **§ 6171 Formation of Rules and Regulations**

With the approval of the Supreme Court, the State Bar may formulate and enforce rules and regulations to carry out the purposes and objectives of this article, including rules and regulations requiring all of the following:

(a) That the articles of incorporation or bylaws of a law corporation shall include a provision whereby the capital stock of the corporation owned by a disqualified person (as defined in the Professional Corporation Act) or a deceased person shall be sold to the corporation or to the remaining shareholders of the corporation within such time as the rules and regulations may provide.

(b) That a law corporation, as a condition of obtaining a certificate pursuant to the Professional Corporation Act and this article, shall provide and maintain security by insurance or otherwise for claims against it by its clients for errors and omissions arising out of the rendering of professional services.

(c) That the name of the law corporation and any name or names under which it renders legal services shall be in compliance with the rules and regulations.

(d) That the law corporation shall obtain from the State Bar, and maintain current, a fictitious name permit when required by the rules and regulations; that the permit may be obtained, maintained, suspended, and revoked pursuant to procedures set forth in the rules and regulations; and that the law corporation shall pay an application and renewal fee for the permit in such amounts as may be determined by the State Bar.

(e) This section shall become operative January 1, 1996. (Added by Stats. 1993, ch. 955.)

#### **§ 6171.1 Death of Sole Shareholder**

Six months and one day following the death of a sole shareholder of a law corporation, the certificate of registration of the law corporation shall be deemed canceled by operation of this section. However, the certificate may be sooner canceled by receipt in the State Bar office of a written request for the cancellation from the personal representative or sole heir of the deceased shareholder or the person to whom the shares passed by will or operation of law following the death of the sole shareholder. (Added by Stats. 1985, ch. 465.)

**§ 6172 Disciplinary Powers of Supreme Court**

Nothing in this article shall be construed as affecting or impairing the disciplinary powers and authority of the Supreme Court or of the State Bar in respect of conduct of licensees of the State Bar nor modifying the statutes and rules governing such conduct, except as expressly provided in this article and except that licensees of the State Bar may properly render legal services as officers or employees of a law corporation and may participate as shareholders, officers and directors thereof, under the terms and conditions provided by this article and the Professional Corporation Act. (Added by Stats. 1968, ch. 1375. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**ARTICLE 10.1  
ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION  
CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

**§ 6173 Program to Certify Alternative  
Dispute Resolution Firms, Providers, or  
Practitioners**

(a) (1) The State Bar shall create a program to certify alternative dispute resolution firms, providers, or practitioners.

(2) A program created pursuant to paragraph (1) shall not require a firm, provider, or practitioner to be a licensee of the State Bar in order to be certified under the program.

(b) The program shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

(1) Procedures established by the State Bar for a firm, provider, or practitioner to become a certified alternative dispute resolution firm, provider, or practitioner that include, but are not limited to, a requirement that the firm, provider, or practitioner verify all of the following:

(A) The firm, provider, or practitioner requires, at a minimum, its arbitrators to comply with the Ethics Standards for Neutral Arbitrators in Contractual Arbitration as adopted by the Judicial Council pursuant to Section 1281.85 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(B) The firm, provider, or practitioner requires, at a minimum, its mediators to comply with ethical standards that are equivalent to the Rules of Conduct for Mediators in Court-Connected Mediation Programs for General Civil Cases as provided in Rules 3.850 to 3.860, inclusive, of the California Rules of Court.

(C) The firm, provider, or practitioner has procedures in place for persons to make complaints regarding the failure of an arbitrator or mediator of the firm, provider, or practitioner to comply with the standards described in subparagraph (A) or (B), as applicable. For mediators, those complaint procedures shall be substantially similar to the complaint procedures specified in Article 3 (commencing with Rule 3.865) of Chapter 3 of Division 8 of Title 3 of the California Rules of Court.

(D) The firm, provider, or practitioner has procedures to remedy failures of arbitrators or mediators to comply with the standards described in subparagraph (A) or (B), as applicable.

(2) Different levels or tiers for certification that meet both of the following requirements:

(A) Higher levels or tiers are awarded to firms, providers, or practitioners that demonstrate a higher level of commitment to accountability and consumer protection based on criteria or other standards, including, but not limited to, additional education or training, adopted by the State Bar.

(B) The levels or tiers do not reflect an assessment of the quality of a firm, provider, or practitioner.

(3) Authority for the State Bar to deny or revoke certification for a failure to meet or maintain certification standards.

(c) (1) The State Bar may charge an alternative dispute resolution firm, provider, or practitioner seeking certification pursuant to this section a fee to cover the reasonable costs of administering the program.

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(2) The fee charged pursuant to paragraph (1) may be higher in the early years of the program to reimburse the State Bar for costs related to the planning and establishment of the program, including, but not limited to, technology and preliminary staffing costs.

(3) The State Bar shall not use any moneys received from the annual license fees collected pursuant to Section 6140 or 6141 for any costs associated with this section.

(d) For purposes of this article:

(1) “Alternative dispute resolution” means mediation, arbitration, conciliation, or other nonjudicial procedure that involves a neutral party in the decisionmaking process.

(2) “Program” means the program created pursuant to subdivision (a). (Added by Stats. 2024, ch. 986. Amended by Stats. 2025, ch. 405.)

### ARTICLE 10.2 LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIPS

#### § 6174 Limited Liability Partnership— Administrative or Filing Requirements, Payment and Use of Fees

Pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 16953 of the Corporations Code, a limited liability partnership providing legal services shall comply with all administrative or filing requirements of the State Bar, including, but not limited to, the payment of fees, and all rules and regulations adopted by the board and approved by the Supreme Court. All fees shall be paid into the treasury of the State Bar and shall be used for its regulatory and disciplinary purposes. (Added by Stats. 2010, ch. 2, operative January 25, 2010.)

#### § 6174.5 Limited Liability Partnership— Certificate of Registration; Filing Requirements

At the time of filing an Application for Issuance of a Certificate of Registration as a Limited Liability Partnership pursuant to the Rules of the State Bar, an applicant for registration shall also file with the State Bar a separate form stating that the limited liability partnership has complied with the security requirements

described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 16956 of the Corporations Code. (Added by Stats. 2010, ch. 2, operative January 25, 2010.)

### ARTICLE 10.5 PROVISION OF FINANCIAL SERVICES BY LAWYERS

#### § 6175 Definitions

As used in this article, the following definitions apply:

(a) “Lawyer” means a licensee of the State Bar or a person who is admitted and in good standing and eligible to practice before the bar of any United States court or the highest court of the District of Columbia or any state, territory, or insular possession of the United States, or licensed to practice law in, or is admitted in good standing and eligible to practice before the bar of the highest court of, a foreign country or any political subdivision thereof, and includes any agent of the lawyer or law firm or law corporation doing business in the state.

(b) “Client” means a person who has, within the three years preceding the sale of financial products by a lawyer to that person, employed that lawyer for legal services. The settlor and trustee of a trust shall be considered one person.

(c) “Elder” and “dependent elder” shall have the meaning as defined in Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 15600) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(d) “Financial products” means long-term care insurance, life insurance, and annuities governed by the Insurance Code, or its successors.

(e) “Sell” means to act as a broker for a commission. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 454. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### § 6175.3 Selling Financial Products to Clients— Disclosure Requirements

A lawyer, while acting as a fiduciary, may sell financial products to a client who is an elder or dependent adult with whom the lawyer has or has had, within the preceding three years, an attorney-client relationship, if the transaction or acquisition and its terms are fair and

reasonable to the client, and if the lawyer provides that client with a disclosure that satisfies all of the following conditions:

- (a) The disclosure is in writing and is clear and conspicuous. The disclosure shall be a separate document, appropriately entitled, in 12-point print with one inch of space on all borders.
- (b) The disclosure, in a manner that should reasonably have been understood by that client, is signed by the client, or the client's conservator, guardian, or agent under a valid durable power of attorney.
- (c) The disclosure states that the lawyer shall receive a commission and sets forth the amount of the commission and the actual percentage rate of the commission, if any. If the actual amount of the commission cannot be ascertained at the outset of the transaction, the disclosure shall include the actual percentage rate of the commission or the alternate basis upon which the commission will be computed, including an example of how the commission would be calculated.
- (d) The disclosure identifies the source of the commission and the relationship between the source of the commission and the person receiving the commission.
- (e) The disclosure is presented to the client at or prior to the time the recommendation of the financial product is made.
- (f) The disclosure advises the client that he or she may obtain independent advice regarding the purchase of the financial product and will be given a reasonable opportunity to seek that advice.
- (g) The disclosure contains a statement that the financial product may be returned to the issuing company within 30 days of receipt by the client for a refund as set forth in Section 10127.10 of the Insurance Code.
- (h) The disclosure contains a statement that if the purchase of the financial product is for the purposes of Medi-Cal planning, the client has been advised of other appropriate alternatives, including spend-down strategies, and of the possibility of obtaining a fair hearing or obtaining a court order. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 454.)

#### **§ 6175.4 Remedies for Damages**

(a) A client who suffers any damage as the result of a violation of this article by any lawyer may bring an action against that person to recover or obtain one or more of the following remedies:

- (1) Actual damages, but in no case shall the total award of damages in a class action be less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000).
- (2) An order enjoining the violation.
- (3) Restitution of property.
- (4) Punitive damages.
- (5) Any other relief that the court deems proper.

(b) A client may seek and be awarded, in addition to the remedies specified in subdivision (a), an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) where the trier of fact (1) finds that the client has suffered substantial physical, emotional, or economic damage resulting from the defendant's conduct, (2) makes an affirmative finding in regard to one or more of the factors set forth in subdivision (b) of Section 3345 of the Civil Code, and (3) finds that an additional award is appropriate. Judgment in a class action may award each class member the additional award where the trier of fact has made the foregoing findings. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 454.)

#### **§ 6175.5 Violation—Cause for Discipline**

A violation of this article by a licensee shall be cause for discipline by the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 454. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### **§ 6175.6 Court Reporting Requirements for Violations**

The court shall report the name, address, and professional license number of any person found in violation of this article to the appropriate professional licensing agencies for review and possible disciplinary action. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 454.)

#### **§ 6176 Scope of Article—Provisions Not Exclusive**

Nothing in this article shall be deemed to limit, reduce, or preclude enforcement of any obligation, statute, State

Bar Rule of Professional Conduct, or court rule, including, but not limited to, those relating to the lawyer's fiduciary duties, that are otherwise applicable to any transaction in which a lawyer is involved. (Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 454.)

**§ 6177 State Bar Report to the Legislature—  
Complaints Filed; Disciplinary Action Taken**

The State Bar shall include in its Annual Discipline Report information on the number of complaints filed against California attorneys alleging a violation of this article. The report shall also include the type of charges made in each complaint, the number of resulting investigations initiated, and the number and nature of any disciplinary actions taken by the State Bar for violations of this article. (Added by Stats. 2000, ch. 442. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2024, ch. 227.)

**ARTICLE 11  
CESSATION OF LAW PRACTICE—  
JURISDICTION OF COURTS**

**§ 6180 Notice of Cessation; Jurisdiction of  
Courts**

When an attorney engaged in law practice in this state dies, resigns, becomes an inactive licensee of the State Bar, is disbarred, or is suspended from the active practice of law and is required by the order of suspension to give notice of the suspension, notice of cessation of law practice shall be given and the courts of this state shall have jurisdiction, as provided in this article. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6180.1 Notice; Form and Contents; Persons  
Notified**

The notice shall contain any information that may be required by any order of disbarment, suspension, or of acceptance of the attorneys' resignation, by any rule of the Supreme Court, Judicial Council, or the State Bar, and by any order of a court of the state having jurisdiction pursuant to this article or Article 12 (commencing with Section 6190) of this chapter. It shall be mailed to all persons who are then clients, to opposing counsel, to courts and agencies in which the attorney then had pending matters with an identification of the matter, to

any errors and omissions insurer, to the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar and to any other person or entity having reason to be informed of the death, change of status or discontinuance or interruption of law practice. In the event of the death or incompetency of the attorney, the notice shall be given by the personal representative or guardian or conservator of the attorney or, if none, by the person having custody or control of the files and records of the attorney. In other cases, the notice shall be given by the attorney or a person authorized by the attorney or by the person having custody and control of the files and records. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended by Stats. 1975, ch. 387; Stats. 1989, ch. 582, effective September 21, 1989; Stats. 1992, ch. 156.)

**§ 6180.2 Application for Assumption of  
Jurisdiction Over Law Practice; Venue**

Notwithstanding the giving of notice pursuant to Section 6180.1, the superior court on its own motion, or a client of the attorney, the State Bar, or an interested person or entity may make application to the superior court for the county where the attorney maintains or more recently has maintained his or her principal office for the practice of law or where he or she resides, for assumption by the court of jurisdiction over the law practice to the extent provided in this article. In any proceeding under this article, the State Bar shall be permitted to intervene and to assume primary responsibility for conducting the action. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 1989, ch. 582, effective September 21, 1989.)

**§ 6180.3 Contents and Verification of  
Application**

The application shall be verified, and shall state facts supporting the occurrence of one or more of the events stated in Section 6180 and either of the following:

- (a) Belief that supervision of the court is warranted because the attorney has left an unfinished client matter for which no other active licensee of the State Bar has, with the consent of the client, agreed to assume responsibility.
- (b) Belief that the interests of one or more clients of the attorney or of one or more other interested persons or entities will be prejudiced if the proceeding herein provided is not maintained. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch.

589. Amended by Stats. 1975, ch. 387; Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6180.4 Hearing on Application; Issuance of Order to Show Cause; Service**

The application shall be set for hearing and an order to show cause shall be issued, directing the attorney, or his or her personal representative, or, if none, the person having custody and control of the files and records, to show cause why the court should not assume jurisdiction over the law practice as provided in this article. A copy of the application and order to show cause shall be served upon the person to whom it is directed by personal delivery or, as an alternate method of service, by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the attorney at the latest address shown on the official licensing records of the State Bar or to the personal representative at the latest address shown in the probate proceeding. Service is complete at the time of mailing, but any prescribed period of notice and any right or duty to do any act or make any response within that prescribed period or on a date certain after notice is served by mail shall be extended five days if the place of address is within the State of California, 10 days if the place of address is outside the State of California but within the United States, and 20 days if the place of address is outside the United States. If the attorney has a guardian or conservator, copies shall also be served upon such fiduciary in similar manner. If the State Bar is not the applicant, copies shall also be served upon the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar in similar manner at the time of service on the attorney. The court may prescribe additional or alternative methods of service of the application and order to show cause, and may prescribe methods of notifying and serving notices and process upon other persons and entities in cases not specifically provided for herein. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 1989, ch. 582, effective September 21, 1989; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6180.5 Court Order Assuming Jurisdiction; Appointment and Duties of Attorneys**

If the court finds that one or more of the events stated in Section 6180 has occurred, and that supervision of the courts is warranted because the affected attorney has left an unfinished client matter for which no other active licensee of the State Bar has with consent of the client agreed to assume responsibility, or that the interest of

one or more of the clients of the attorney or one or more other interested persons or entities will be prejudiced if the proceeding herein provided is not maintained, it may make an order assuming jurisdiction over the attorney's practice pursuant to this article. If the person to whom the order to show cause is directed does not appear the court may make its order upon the verified application or such proof as it may require. Thereupon the court shall appoint one or more active licensees of the State Bar to act under its direction to mail a notice of cessation of law practice pursuant to Section 6180.1 and may order such appointed attorneys to do one or more of the following:

- (a) Examine the files and records of the law practice, and obtain information as to any pending matters which may require attention.
- (b) Notify persons and entities who appear to be clients of the attorney of the occurrence of the event or events stated in Section 6180 and inform them that it may be to their best interest to obtain other legal counsel.
- (c) Apply for an extension of time pending employment of such other counsel by the client.
- (d) With the consent of the client, file notices, motions and pleadings on behalf of the client where jurisdictional time limits are involved and other legal counsel has not yet been obtained.
- (e) Give notice to the depositor and appropriate persons and entities who may be affected, other than clients, of the occurrence of such event or events.
- (f) Arrange for the surrender or delivery of clients' papers or property.
- (g) Arrange for the appointment of a receiver, where applicable, to take possession and control of any and all bank accounts relating to the affected attorney's practice of law, including the general or office account and the clients' trust account.
- (h) Do such other acts as the court may direct to carry out the purposes of this article.

The court shall have jurisdiction over the files and records and law practice of the affected attorney for the limited purposes of this section, and may make all orders necessary or appropriate to exercise this jurisdiction. The court shall provide a copy of any order issued pursuant to this article to the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended

by Stats. 1975, ch. 387; Stats. 1985, ch. 453; Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 1989, ch. 582, effective September 21, 1989; Stats. 1992, ch. 156; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6180.6 Limitation on Conduct of Supervised Law Practice**

Nothing in this article shall authorize the court or an attorney appointed by it pursuant to this article to approve or disapprove of the employment of legal counsel, fix terms of legal employment, fix the compensation which may have been earned by the affected attorney, or supervise or in any way to undertake to conduct the law practice except to the limited extent provided by subdivisions (c) and (d) of Section 6180.5. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended by Stats. 1988, ch. 1159; Stats. 1992, ch. 156.)

**§ 6180.7 Employment of Appointed Attorney or Associates by Client of Affected Attorney**

Unless court approval is first obtained, neither the attorney appointed pursuant to this article nor his corporation nor any partners or associates of the attorney shall accept employment as an attorney by any client of the affected attorney on any matter pending at the time of the appointment. Action taken pursuant to subdivisions (c) and (d) of Section 6180.5 shall not be deemed such employment. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589; Stats. 1992, ch. 156.)

**§ 6180.8 Interim Orders; Service**

Upon a finding by the court that it is more likely than not that the application will be granted and that delay in making the orders described in Section 6180.5 will result in substantial injury to clients, or to others, the court, without notice or upon such notice as it shall prescribe, may make interim orders containing such provisions as the court deems appropriate under the circumstances. Such order shall be served in the manner provided in Section 6180.4, and if the application and order to show cause have not yet been served, they shall be served at the time of serving the order made pursuant to this section. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589.)

**§ 6180.9 Pending Proceedings in Probate, Guardianship, or Conservatorship; Subjection of Legal Representative to Orders of Court**

If there is a pending proceeding in probate, guardianship, or conservatorship relating to the affected attorney, the court having jurisdiction pursuant to this article may inquire into acts done by the legal representative of the attorney concerning the law practice. Upon reasonable notice to the legal representative, the court may determine that the acts of the legal representative relating to such law practice shall be subject to its orders pursuant to this article. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589.)

**§ 6180.10 Application of Lawyer-Client Privilege to Appointed Attorney; Disclosures**

Persons examining the files and records of the law practice of the affected attorney pursuant to this article shall observe the lawyer-client privilege and shall make disclosure only to the extent necessary to carry out the purposes of this article. Such disclosure is a disclosure which is reasonably necessary for the accomplishment of the purpose for which the affected attorney was consulted. The appointment of such licensee of the State Bar shall not affect the lawyer-client privilege which privilege shall apply to communications by or to the appointed lawyers to the same extent as it would have applied to communications by or to the affected attorney. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6180.11 Liabilities of Persons and Entities**

No person or entity shall incur any liability by reason of the institution or maintenance of the proceeding. No person shall incur any liability for any act done or omitted to be done pursuant to order of the court under this article. No person or entity shall be liable for failure to apply for court jurisdiction under this article. Nothing in this section shall affect any obligation otherwise existing between the affected attorney and any other person or entity. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended by Stats. 1985, ch. 453.)

**§ 6180.12 Appointed Attorneys;  
Compensation; Reimbursement for Necessary  
Expenses**

A licensee of the State Bar appointed pursuant to Section 6180.5 shall serve without compensation. However, the licensee may be paid reasonable compensation by the State Bar in cases where the State Bar has determined that the licensee has devoted extraordinary time and services which were necessary to the performance of the licensee's duties under this article. All payments of compensation for time and services shall be at the discretion of the State Bar. Any licensee shall be entitled to reimbursement from the State Bar for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of the licensee's duties under this article. Upon court approval of expenses or compensation for time and services, the State Bar shall be entitled to reimbursement therefor from the affected attorney or his or her estate. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended by Stats. 1983, ch. 254; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6180.13 Stay or Appeal of Order**

An order made pursuant to this article is nonappealable, and shall not be stayed by petition for a writ except as ordered by the superior court or the appellate court. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589.)

**§ 6180.14 Attorney and Law Practice Defined**

As used in this article, "attorney" means a licensee or former licensee of the State Bar; "law practice" means (a) a law practice conducted by an individual; (b) a law practice conducted by a partnership, if Section 6180 applies to all partners; and (c) a law practice conducted by a law corporation, if Section 6180 applies to all shareholders of the corporation or if the corporation is described in subdivision (b) of Section 13406 of the Corporations Code. This article does not apply to legal services rendered as an employee, or under a contract which does not create the relationship of lawyer and client. (Added by Stats. 1974, ch. 589. Amended by Stats. 1981, ch. 714, Stats. 1993, ch. 955; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6185 Power of Practice Administrator to  
Control Practice of Deceased or Disabled  
Licensee's Practice**

(a) Upon appointment by the superior court pursuant to Section 2468, 9764, or paragraph (22) or (23) of

subdivision (b) of Section 17200 of the Probate Code, a practice administrator, who is an active licensee of the State Bar, may be granted, by order of the court appointing this person, one or more of the following powers to take control of the practice of a deceased or disabled licensee of the State Bar of California:

(1) Take control of all operating and client trust accounts, business assets, equipment, client directories, and premises that were used in the conduct of the deceased or disabled licensee's practice.

(2) Take control and review all client files of the deceased or disabled licensee.

(3) Contact each client of the deceased or disabled licensee who can be reasonably ascertained and located to inform the client of the condition of the licensee and of the appointment of a practice administrator. The practice administrator may discuss various options for the selection of successor counsel with the client.

(4) In each case that is pending before any court or administrative body, notify the appropriate court or administrative body and contact opposing counsel in the cases under the control of the deceased or disabled licensee and obtain additional time for new counsel to appear for the affected client.

(5) Determine the liabilities of the practice and pay them for the assets of the practice. If the assets of the practice are insufficient to pay these obligations or for the expenses incurred by the practice administrator to carry out the powers ordered pursuant to this section, the practice administrator shall apply to the personal representative to obtain the additional funds that may be required. If the personal representative and the practice administrator are unable to agree on the amount that is necessary for the practice administrator to undertake the duties ordered pursuant to this paragraph, either party may apply to the court having jurisdiction over the estate of the deceased or disabled licensee for an order requesting funds from the estate.

(6) Employ any person, including but not limited to the employees of the deceased or disabled licensee, who may be necessary to assist the practice administrator in the management, winding up, and disposal of the practice.

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(7) Create a plan for disposition of the practice of the deceased or disabled licensee to protect its value as an asset of the estate of the licensee. Subject to the approval of the personal representative of the estate, agree to the sale of the practice and its goodwill.

(8) Subject to the approval of the personal representative of the estate, reach agreements with successor counsel for division of fees for work in process on the cases of the deceased or disabled licensee.

(9) Subject to the prohibitions against soliciting cases, the practice administrator may act as successor counsel for a client of the deceased or disabled licensee.

(b) If the practice administrator is uncertain as to how to proceed with the powers granted pursuant to this section, he or she may apply to the Superior Court that has jurisdiction over the estate of the deceased or disabled licensee for instructions. (Added by Stats. 1998, ch. 682. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### ARTICLE 12

#### INCAPACITY TO ATTEND TO LAW PRACTICE— JURISDICTION OF COURTS

##### **§ 6190 Authority of Courts; Attorney Incapable of Practice; Protection of Clients**

The courts of the state shall have the jurisdiction as provided in this article when an attorney engaged in the practice of law in this state has, for any reason, including but not limited to excessive use of alcohol or drugs, physical or mental illness, or other infirmity or other cause, become incapable of devoting the time and attention to, and providing the quality of service for, his or her law practice which is necessary to protect the interest of a client if there is an unfinished client matter for which no other active licensee of the State Bar, with the consent of the client, has agreed to assume responsibility. (Added by Stats. 1975, ch. 387. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

##### **§ 6190.1 Application for Assumption by Court of Jurisdiction; Consent by Attorney**

(a) An application for assumption by the court of jurisdiction under this article shall be made to the superior court for the county where the attorney maintains or most recently has maintained his or her principal office for the practice of law or where such attorney resides. The court may assume jurisdiction over the law practice of an attorney to the extent provided in Article 11 (commencing with Section 6180) of Chapter 4 of Division 3.

(b) Where an attorney consents to the assumption by the court of jurisdiction under the article, the State Bar, a client, or an interested person or entity may apply to the court for assumption of jurisdiction over the law practice of the attorney. In any proceeding under this subdivision, the State Bar shall be permitted to intervene and to assume primary responsibility for conducting the action.

(c) Where an attorney does not consent to the assumption by the court of jurisdiction under this article, only the State Bar may apply to the court for assumption of jurisdiction over the law practice of the attorney.

(d) The chief trial counsel may appoint, pursuant to rules adopted by the board of trustees, an examiner or coexaminer from among the licensees of the State Bar in an investigation or formal proceeding under this article. (Added by Stats. 1975, ch. 387. Amended by Stats. 1989, ch. 582, effective September 21, 1989; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

##### **§ 6190.2 Verification and Contents of Application**

The application shall be verified and shall state facts showing each of the following:

(a) Probable cause to believe that the facts set forth in Section 6190 have occurred.

(b) The interest of the applicant.

(c) Probable cause to believe that the interests of the client or of an interested person or entity will be prejudiced if the proceeding herein provided is not maintained. (Added by Stats. 1975, ch. 387. Amended by Stats. 1989, ch. 582, effective September 21, 1989.)

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### **§ 6190.3 Hearing; Notice; Service of Copies of Application**

The application shall be set for hearing. A copy of the application and notice of the hearing shall be served upon the attorney by personal delivery or, as an alternate method of service, by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the attorney at the latest address shown on the official licensing records of the State Bar. Service is complete at the time of mailing, but any prescribed period of notice and any right or duty to do any act or make any response within that prescribed period or on a date certain after notice is served by mail shall be extended five days if the place of address is within the State of California, 10 days if the place of address is outside the State of California but within the United States, and 20 days if the place of address is outside the United States. If the attorney has a guardian or conservator, copies shall also be served upon such fiduciary in similar manner. If the State Bar is not an applicant, copies shall also be served upon the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar in similar manner at the time of service on the attorney. The court may prescribe additional or alternative methods of service of the application and notice, and may prescribe methods of notifying and serving notices and process upon other persons and entities in cases not specifically provided for herein. (Added by Stats. 1989, ch. 582, effective September 21, 1989. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6190.34 Findings; Orders**

If the court finds that (a) the facts set forth in Section 6190 have occurred and, (b) that the interests of the client, or of an interested person or entity will be prejudiced if the proceeding provided herein is not maintained, the court shall order the applicant to mail a notice of cessation of law practice pursuant to Section 6180.1 and may make all orders provided for by the provisions of Article 11 (commencing with Section 6180) of Chapter 4 of Division 3. The court shall provide a copy of any order issued pursuant to this article to the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar. (Formerly 6190.3, added by Stats. 1975, ch. 387. Renumbered 6190.34 and amended by Stats. 1989, ch. 582, effective September 21, 1989; Stats. 1992, ch. 156.)

### **§ 6190.4 Law Governing**

The provisions of Article 11 (commencing with section 6180) of Chapter 4 of Division 3 of this code shall apply

to the proceeding, whenever possible. (Added by Stats. 1975, ch. 387.)

### **§ 6190.5 Concurrent Proceedings**

The proceeding may be maintained concurrently with a disciplinary investigation or proceeding provided for by this chapter. (Added by Stats. 1975, ch. 387.)

### **§ 6190.6 Termination of Proceedings**

Upon motion duly made by any interested party, the court may terminate the proceedings. (Added by Stats. 1975, ch. 387.)

## **ARTICLE 13 ARBITRATION OF ATTORNEYS' FEES**

### **§ 6200 Establishment of System and Procedure; Jurisdiction; Local Bar Association Rules**

(a) The board of trustees shall, by rule, establish, maintain, and administer a system and procedure for the arbitration, and may establish, maintain, and administer a system and procedure for mediation of disputes concerning fees, costs, or both, charged for professional services by licensees of the State Bar or by members of the bar of other jurisdictions. The rules may include provision for a filing fee in the amount as the board may, from time to time, determine.

(b) This article shall not apply to any of the following:

(1) Disputes where a licensee of the State Bar of California is also admitted to practice in another jurisdiction or where an attorney is only admitted to practice in another jurisdiction, and the attorney maintains no office in the State of California, and no material portion of the services were rendered in the State of California.

(2) Claims for affirmative relief against the attorney for damages or otherwise based upon alleged malpractice or professional misconduct, except as provided in subdivision (a) of Section 6203.

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- (3) Disputes where the fee or cost to be paid by the client or on the client's behalf has been determined pursuant to statute or court order.
- (c) Unless the client has agreed in writing to arbitration under this article of all disputes concerning fees, costs, or both, arbitration under this article shall be voluntary for a client and shall be mandatory for an attorney if commenced by a client. Mediation under this article shall be voluntary for an attorney and a client.
- (d) The board of trustees shall adopt rules to allow arbitration and mediation of attorney fee and cost disputes under this article to proceed under arbitration and mediation systems sponsored by local bar associations in this state. Rules of procedure promulgated by local bar associations are subject to review by the board or a committee designated by the board to ensure that they provide for a fair, impartial, and speedy hearing and award.
- (e) In adopting or reviewing rules of arbitration under this section, the board shall provide that the panel shall include one attorney member whose area of practice is either, at the option of the client, civil law, if the attorney's representation involved civil law, or criminal law, if the attorney's representation involved criminal law, as follows:
- (1) If the panel is composed of three members the panel shall include one attorney member whose area of practice is either, at the option of the client, civil or criminal law, and shall include one lay member.
  - (2) If the panel is composed of one member, that member shall be an attorney whose area of practice is either, at the option of the client, civil or criminal law.
- (f) In any arbitration or mediation conducted pursuant to this article by the State Bar or by a local bar association, pursuant to rules of procedure approved by the board of trustees, an arbitrator or mediator, as well as the arbitrating association and its directors, officers, and employees, shall have the same immunity that attaches in judicial proceedings.
- (g) In the conduct of arbitrations under this article the arbitrator or arbitrators may do all of the following:
- (1) Take and hear evidence pertaining to the proceeding.
  - (2) Administer oaths and affirmations.
  - (3) Issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, and documents pertaining to the proceeding.
- (h) Participation in mediation is a voluntary consensual process, based on direct negotiations between the attorney and client, and is an extension of the negotiated settlement process. All discussions and offers of settlement are confidential and shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code), and may not be disclosed in any subsequent arbitration or other proceedings. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 719. Amended by Stats. 1984, ch. 825; Stats. 1989, ch. 1416; Stats. 1990, ch. 483; Stats. 1990, ch. 1020; Stats. 1993, ch. 1262; Stats. 1994, ch. 479; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2009, ch. 54; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2015, ch. 537; Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2021, ch. 615.)
- § 6201 Notice to Client; Request for Arbitration; Client's Waiver of Right to Arbitration**
- (a) The rules adopted by the board of trustees shall provide that an attorney shall forward a written notice to the client prior to or at the time of service of summons or claim in an action against the client, or prior to or at the commencement of any other proceeding against the client under a contract between attorney and client which provides for an alternative to arbitration under this article, for recovery of fees, costs, or both.
- The written notice shall be in the form that the board of trustees prescribes, and shall include a statement of the client's right to arbitration under this article. Failure to give this notice shall be a ground for the dismissal of the action or other proceeding. The notice shall not be required, however, prior to initiating mediation of the dispute.
- The rules adopted by the board of trustees shall provide that the client's failure to request arbitration within 30 days after receipt of notice from the attorney shall be deemed a waiver of the client's right to arbitration under the provisions of this article.

(b) If an attorney, or the attorney's assignee, commences an action in any court or any other proceeding and the client is entitled to maintain arbitration under this article, and the dispute is not one to which subdivision (b) of Section 6200 applies, the client may stay the action or other proceeding by serving and filing a request for arbitration in accordance with the rules established by the board of trustees pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 6200. The request for arbitration shall be served and filed prior to the filing of an answer in the action or equivalent response in the other proceeding; failure to so request arbitration prior to the filing of an answer or equivalent response shall be deemed a waiver of the client's right to arbitration under the provisions of this article if notice of the client's right to arbitration was given pursuant to subdivision (a).

(c) Upon filing and service of the request for arbitration, the action or other proceeding shall be automatically stayed until the award of the arbitrators is issued or the arbitration is otherwise terminated. The stay may be vacated in whole or in part, after a hearing duly noticed by any party or the court, if and to the extent the court finds that the matter is not appropriate for arbitration under the provisions of this article. The action or other proceeding may thereafter proceed subject to the provisions of Section 6204.

(d) A client's right to request or maintain arbitration under the provisions of this article is waived by the client commencing an action or filing any pleading seeking either of the following:

- (1) Judicial resolution of a fee dispute to which this article applies.
- (2) Affirmative relief against the attorney for damages or otherwise based upon alleged malpractice or professional misconduct.

(e) If the client waives the right to arbitration under this article, the parties may stipulate to set aside the waiver and to proceed with arbitration. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 719. Amended by Stats. 1979, ch. 878; Stats. 1982, ch. 979; Stats. 1984, ch. 825; Stats. 1989, ch. 1416; Stats. 1990, ch. 483; Stats. 1993, ch. 1262; Stats. 1994, ch. 479; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

#### **§ 6202 Disclosure of Attorney-Client Communication and Work Product; Limitation**

The provisions of Article 3 (commencing with Section 950) of Chapter 4 of Division 8 of the Evidence Code shall

not prohibit the disclosure of any relevant communication, nor shall the provisions of Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 2018.010) of Title 4 of Part 4 of the Code of Civil Procedure be construed to prohibit the disclosure of any relevant work product of the attorney in connection with: (a) an arbitration hearing or mediation pursuant to this article; (b) a trial after arbitration; or (c) judicial confirmation, correction, or vacation of an arbitration award. In no event shall such disclosure be deemed a waiver of the confidential character of such matters for any other purpose. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 719. Amended by Stats. 1982, ch. 979; Stats. 1984, ch. 825; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2004, ch. 182.)

#### **§ 6203 Award; Contents; Finality; Petition to Court; Award of Fees and Costs**

(a) The award shall be in writing and signed by the arbitrators concurring therein. It shall include a determination of all the questions submitted to the arbitrators, the decision of which is necessary in order to determine the controversy. The award shall not include any award to either party for costs or attorney's fees incurred in preparation for or in the course of the fee arbitration proceeding, notwithstanding any contract between the parties providing for such an award or costs or attorney's fees. However, the filing fee paid may be allocated between the parties by the arbitrators. This section shall not preclude an award of costs or attorney's fees to either party by a court pursuant to subdivision (c) of this section or of subdivision (d) of Section 6204. The State Bar, or the local bar association delegated by the State Bar to conduct the arbitration, shall deliver to each of the parties with the award, an original declaration of service of the award.

Evidence relating to claims of malpractice and professional misconduct, shall be admissible only to the extent that those claims bear upon the fees, costs, or both, to which the attorney is entitled. The arbitrators shall not award affirmative relief, in the form of damages or offset or otherwise, for injuries underlying the claim. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the arbitrators from awarding the client a refund of unearned fees, costs, or both previously paid to the attorney.

(b) Even if the parties to the arbitration have not agreed in writing to be bound, the arbitration award shall become binding upon the passage of 30 days after service of notice of the award, unless a party has, within

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the 30 days, sought a trial after arbitration pursuant to Section 6204. If an action has previously been filed in any court, any petition to confirm, correct, or vacate the award shall be to the court in which the action is pending, and may be served by mail on any party who has appeared, as provided in Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 1003) of Title 14 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure; otherwise it shall be in the same manner as provided in Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 1285) of Title 9 of Part 3 of the Code of Civil Procedure. If no action is pending in any court, the award may be confirmed, corrected, or vacated by petition to the court having jurisdiction over the amount of the arbitration award, but otherwise in the same manner as provided in Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 1285) of Title 9 of Part 3 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(c) Neither party to the arbitration may recover costs or attorney's fees incurred in preparation for or in the course of the fee arbitration proceeding with the exception of the filing fee paid pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section. However, a court confirming, correcting, or vacating an award under this section may award to the prevailing party reasonable fees and costs incurred in obtaining confirmation, correction, or vacation of the award including, if applicable, fees and costs on appeal. The party obtaining judgment confirming, correcting, or vacating the award shall be the prevailing party except that, without regard to consideration of who the prevailing party may be, if a party did not appear at the arbitration hearing in the manner provided by the rules adopted by the board of trustees, that party shall not be entitled to attorney's fees or costs upon confirmation, correction, or vacation of the award.

(d) (1) In any matter arbitrated under this article in which the award is binding or has become binding by operation of law or has become a judgment either after confirmation under subdivision (c) or after a trial after arbitration under Section 6204, or in any matter mediated under this article, if: (A) the award, judgment, or agreement reached after mediation includes a refund of fees or costs, or both, to the client and (B) the attorney has not complied with that award, judgment, or agreement the State Bar shall enforce the award, judgment, or agreement by placing the attorney on involuntary inactive status until the refund has been paid.

(2) The State Bar shall provide for an administrative procedure to determine whether an award, judgment, or agreement should be enforced

pursuant to this subdivision. An award, judgment, or agreement shall be so enforced if:

(A) The State Bar shows that the attorney has failed to comply with a binding fee arbitration award, judgment, or agreement rendered pursuant to this article.

(B) The attorney has not proposed a payment plan acceptable to the client or the State Bar.

However, the award, judgment, or agreement shall not be so enforced if the attorney has demonstrated that he or she (i) is not personally responsible for making or ensuring payment of the refund, or (ii) is unable to pay the refund.

(3) An attorney who has failed to comply with a binding award, judgment, or agreement shall pay administrative penalties or reasonable costs, or both, as directed by the State Bar. Penalties imposed shall not exceed 20 percent of the amount to be refunded to the client or one thousand dollars (\$1,000), whichever is greater. Any penalties or costs, or both, that are not paid shall be added to the license fee of the attorney for the next calendar year.

(4) The board shall terminate the inactive enrollment upon proof that the attorney has complied with the award, judgment, or agreement and upon payment of any costs or penalties, or both, assessed as a result of the attorney's failure to comply.

(5) A request for enforcement under this subdivision shall be made within four years from the date (A) the arbitration award was mailed, (B) the judgment was entered, or (C) the date the agreement was signed. In an arbitrated matter, however, in no event shall a request be made prior to 100 days from the date of the service of a signed copy of the award. In cases where the award is appealed, a request shall not be made prior to 100 days from the date the award has become final as set forth in this section. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 719. Amended by Stats. 1982, ch. 979; Stats. 1984, ch. 825; Stats. 1989, ch. 1416; Stats. 1990, ch. 483; Stats. 1992, ch. 1265; Stats. 1993, ch. 1262; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 2009, ch. 54; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6204 Agreement to be Bound by Award of Arbitrator; Trial After Arbitration in Absence of Agreement; Prevailing Party; Effect of Award and Determination**

(a) The parties may agree in writing to be bound by the award of arbitrators appointed pursuant to this article at any time after the dispute over fees, costs, or both, has arisen. In the absence of such an agreement, either party shall be entitled to a trial after arbitration if sought within 30 days, pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c), except that if either party willfully fails to appear at the arbitration hearing in the manner provided by the rules adopted by the board of trustees, that party shall not be entitled to a trial after arbitration. The determination of willfulness shall be made by the court. The party who failed to appear at the arbitration shall have the burden of proving that the failure to appear was not willful. In making its determination, the court may consider any findings made by the arbitrators on the subject of a party's failure to appear.

(b) If there is an action pending, the trial after arbitration shall be initiated by filing a rejection of arbitration award and request for trial after arbitration in that action within 30 days after service of notice of the award. If the rejection of arbitration award has been filed by the plaintiff in the pending action, all defendants shall file a responsive pleading within 30 days following service upon the defendant of the rejection of arbitration award and request for trial after arbitration. If the rejection of arbitration award has been filed by the defendant in the pending action, all defendants shall file a responsive pleading within 30 days after the filing of the rejection of arbitration award and request for trial after arbitration. Service may be made by mail on any party who has appeared; otherwise service shall be made in the manner provided in Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 413.10) of Title 5 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure. Upon service and filing of the rejection of arbitration award, any stay entered pursuant to Section 6201 shall be vacated, without the necessity of a court order.

(c) If no action is pending, the trial after arbitration shall be initiated by the commencement of an action in the court having jurisdiction over the amount of money in controversy within 30 days after service of notice of the award. After the filing of such an action, the action shall proceed in accordance with the provisions of Part 2 (commencing with Section 307) of the Code of Civil Procedure, concerning civil actions generally.

(d) The party seeking a trial after arbitration shall be the prevailing party if that party obtains a judgment more favorable than that provided by the arbitration award, and in all other cases the other party shall be the prevailing party. The prevailing party may, in the discretion of the court, be entitled to an allowance for reasonable attorney's fees and costs incurred in the trial after arbitration, which allowance shall be fixed by the court. In fixing the attorney's fees, the court shall consider the award and determinations of the arbitrators, in addition to any other relevant evidence.

(e) Except as provided in this section, the award and determinations of the arbitrators shall not be admissible nor operate as collateral estoppel or res judicata in any action or proceeding. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 719. Amended by Stats. 1979, ch. 878; Stats. 1982, ch. 979; Stats. 1984, ch. 825; Stats. 1992, ch. 1265; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104; Stats. 1998, ch. 798; Stats. 2009, ch. 54; Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

**§ 6204.5 Disqualification of Arbitrators; Post-Arbitration Notice**

(a) The State Bar shall provide by rule for an appropriate procedure to disqualify an arbitrator or mediator upon request of either party.

(b) The State Bar, or the local bar association delegated by the State Bar to conduct the arbitration, shall deliver a notice to the parties advising them of their rights to judicial relief subsequent to the arbitration proceeding. (Added by Stats. 1986, ch. 475; Stats. 1996, ch. 1104.)

**§ 6205** (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 719. Repealed by Stats. 1996, ch. 1104.)

**§ 6206 Arbitration Barred if Time for Commencing Civil Action Barred; Exception**

The time for filing a civil action seeking judicial resolution of a dispute subject to arbitration under this article shall be tolled from the time an arbitration is initiated in accordance with the rules adopted by the board of trustees until (a) 30 days after receipt of notice of the award of the arbitrators, or (b) receipt of notice that the arbitration is otherwise terminated, whichever comes first. Arbitration shall not be commenced under this article if a civil action requesting the same relief would be barred by Title 2 (commencing with Section 312) of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure; provided that this

limitation shall not apply to a request for arbitration by a client, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 6201, following the commencement of an action in any court or any other proceeding by the attorney. (Added by Stats. 1978, ch. 719. Amended by Stats. 1984, ch. 825; Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2019, ch. 13.)

## ARTICLE 14

### FUNDS FOR THE PROVISION OF LEGAL SERVICES TO INDIGENT PERSONS

#### **§ 6210 Legislative Findings; Purpose of Program**

The Legislature finds that, due to insufficient funding, existing programs providing free legal services in civil matters to indigent persons, especially underserved client groups, such as the elderly, the disabled, juveniles, and non-English-speaking persons, do not adequately meet the needs of these persons. It is the purpose of this article to expand the availability and improve the quality of existing free legal services in civil matters to indigent persons, and to initiate new programs that will provide services to them. The Legislature finds that the use of funds collected by the State Bar pursuant to this article for these purposes is in the public interest, is a proper use of the funds, and is consistent with essential public and governmental purposes in the judicial branch of government. The Legislature further finds that the expansion, improvement, and initiation of legal services to indigent persons will aid in the advancement of the science of jurisprudence and the improvement of the administration of justice. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789.)

#### **§ 6210.5 Legal Services Trust Fund Commission; Composition, Authority, Administration, and Reporting**

(a) There shall be created, within the State Bar, a Legal Services Trust Fund Commission to administer IOLTA accounts, Equal Access Funds, or similar funds or grant moneys intended for the support of qualified legal services projects and qualified support centers, as those terms are defined in Section 6213.

(b) (1) The Legal Services Trust Fund Commission shall be comprised of 24 commissioners as follows:

(A) Six commissioners shall be appointed by the State Bar Board of Trustees.

(B) Two commissioners shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.

(C) Two commissioners shall be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

(D) Ten commissioners shall be appointed by the Chair of the Judicial Council, of which three shall be nonvoting judicial advisors. The three nonvoting judicial advisors shall be comprised of two superior court judges and one appellate justice.

(E) Four commissioners shall be appointed by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission, of which at least two shall be, or have been within five years of appointment, indigent persons as defined by Section 6213.

(2) No employee or independent contractor acting as a consultant to a potential recipient of Legal Services Trust Fund grants shall be appointed to the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission. All commissioners shall be designated employees under the Conflict of Interest Code of the State Bar.

(3) Except as provided in paragraph (4), each commissioner shall serve for a term of four years that begins upon appointment. Upon completion of an initial term, a commissioner may be reappointed for a second four-year term. An initial or second term may be extended by one or two years, for a maximum of 10 years, to allow a commissioner to serve as chair or vice chair. A commissioner currently serving as of January 1, 2022, may be reappointed to two additional full terms following the completion of their current term pursuant to paragraph (5).

(4) A commissioner appointed by the chair of the Judicial Council shall have no term limits.

(5) Each commissioner shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing entity. Each appointing entity may stagger their appointments so one-half of the commissioners are appointed in 2022 and the other one-half are appointed in 2023. A commissioner serving as of January 1, 2022, may continue to serve until replaced by the appointing entity or January 1, 2024, whichever occurs first.

(6) Commissioners who are not currently and have never been attorneys licensed in California or another jurisdiction and who submit a form

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designated by the commission to request a per diem shall be entitled to receive fifty dollars (\$50) per day for each day that they attend a commission meeting of at least one hour in length.

(c) The chair and the vice chair of the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission shall be selected by the Chair of the Judicial Council. The chair of the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission shall preside over the commission's meetings. The Chair of the Judicial Council may select up to two chairs and two vice chairs to lead the commission.

(d) The Legal Services Trust Fund Commission shall be subject to the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code) and the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).

(e) (1) The Legal Services Trust Fund Commission shall recommend to the Board of Trustees of the State Bar rules to determine an applicant's eligibility for grants under this article and for rules related to grant administration, including rules to monitor and evaluate a recipient's compliance with Legal Services Trust Fund requirements and grant terms based on criteria established by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission.

(2) The Legal Services Trust Fund Commission shall recommend to the Board of Trustees of the State Bar the amount proposed to be made available for grant distribution from IOLTA funds, along with the amount to be maintained as a fiscally responsible reserve.

(3) The Board of Trustees of the State Bar shall approve each recommendation made pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2) unless the Board of Trustees of the State Bar makes a finding in writing that a recommendation conflicts with a statutory, fiduciary, or legal obligation of the State Bar.

(4) The decisions of the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission regarding individual grant awards shall take effect without approval by the Board of Trustees of the State Bar. However, the board may reverse or modify an individual grant award if it makes a finding in writing that the award violates Legal Services Trust Fund rules or a statutory, fiduciary, or legal obligation of the State Bar.

(f) Except as provided by subdivision (a) of Section 6033 and by Section 6140.03, the State Bar's actual administrative costs to administer the Legal Services Trust Fund Program, including IOLTA, Equal Access Funds, and similar funds and grant moneys shall be fully funded through these grant programs. The State Bar shall not provide administrative services to the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission in excess of the administrative costs allocated to the State Bar by the Legislature, or by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission as part of any request by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission's request for administrative support.

(g) At the conclusion of each fiscal year, the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission shall include a report of receipts of funds under this article, expenditures for administrative costs, and disbursements of the funds on a county-by-county basis, in the annual report of the State Bar's receipts and expenditures required pursuant to Section 6145. To ensure that awards made by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission are consistent with statute, rules, and other governing authority, the State Bar shall develop a program to audit a representative sample of grant awards each year. The results of the most recent audit shall be included with the report of receipt of funds described in this subdivision.

(h) This section supersedes any conflicting State Bar rules regarding the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission or its responsibilities or oversight by the State Bar's board of trustees. (Added by Stats. 2021, ch. 723. Amended by Stats. 2022, ch. 28.)

### **§ 6211 IOLTA Accounts; Trust Fund Deposits, Interest Distribution, and Professional Conduct Authority**

(a) An attorney or law firm that, in the course of the practice of law, receives or disburses trust funds shall establish and maintain an IOLTA account in which the attorney or law firm shall deposit or invest all client deposits or funds that are nominal in amount or are on deposit or invested for a short period of time. All such client funds may be deposited or invested in a single unsegregated account. The interest and dividends earned on all those accounts shall be paid to the State Bar of California to be used for the purposes set forth in this article.

(b) Nothing in this article shall be construed to prohibit an attorney or law firm from establishing one or more interest bearing bank trust deposit accounts or dividend-paying trust investment accounts as may be permitted by the Supreme Court, with the interest or dividends earned on the accounts payable to clients for trust funds not deposited or invested in accordance with subdivision (a).

(c) With the approval of the Supreme Court, the State Bar may formulate and enforce rules of professional conduct pertaining to the use by attorneys or law firms of an IOLTA account for unsegregated client funds pursuant to this article.

(d) Nothing in this article shall be construed as affecting or impairing the disciplinary powers and authority of the Supreme Court or of the State Bar or as modifying the statutes and rules governing the conduct of licensees of the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 2007, ch. 422; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6212 Requirements in Establishing Client Trust Accounts; Amount of Interest; Remittance to State Bar; Statements and Reports**

An attorney who, or a law firm that, establishes an IOLTA account pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 6211 shall comply with all of the following provisions:

(a) The IOLTA account shall be established and maintained with an eligible institution offering or making available an IOLTA account that meets the requirements of this article. The IOLTA account shall be established and maintained consistent with the attorney's or law firm's duties of professional responsibility. An eligible financial institution shall have no responsibility for selecting the deposit or investment product chosen for the IOLTA account.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision (f), the rate of interest or dividends payable on any IOLTA account shall not be less than the interest rate or dividends generally paid by the eligible institution to nonattorney customers on accounts of the same type meeting the same minimum balance and other eligibility requirements as the IOLTA account. In determining the interest rate or dividend payable on any IOLTA account, an eligible institution may consider, in addition to the balance in the IOLTA account, risk or other factors customarily considered by the eligible institution when setting the interest rate or dividends for its non-IOLTA accounts,

provided that the factors do not discriminate between IOLTA customers and non-IOLTA customers and that these factors do not include the fact that the account is an IOLTA account. The eligible institution shall calculate interest and dividends in accordance with its standard practice for non-IOLTA customers. Nothing in this article shall preclude an eligible institution from paying a higher interest rate or dividend on an IOLTA account or from electing to waive any fees and service charges on an IOLTA account.

(c) Reasonable fees may be deducted from the interest or dividends remitted on an IOLTA account only at the rates and in accordance with the customary practices of the eligible institution for non-IOLTA customers. No other fees or service charges may be deducted from the interest or dividends earned on an IOLTA account. Unless and until the State Bar enacts regulations exempting from compliance with subdivision (a) of Section 6211 those accounts for which maintenance fees exceed the interest or dividends paid, an eligible institution may deduct the fees and service charges in excess of the interest or dividends paid on an IOLTA account from the aggregate interest and dividends remitted to the State Bar. Fees and service charges other than reasonable fees shall be the sole responsibility of, and may only be charged to, the attorney or law firm maintaining the IOLTA account. Fees and charges shall not be assessed against or deducted from the principal of any IOLTA account. It is the intent of the Legislature that the State Bar develop policies so that eligible institutions do not incur uncompensated administrative costs in adapting their systems to comply with the provisions of Chapter 422 of the Statutes of 2007 or in making investment products available to IOLTA members.

(d) The attorney or law firm shall report IOLTA account compliance and all other IOLTA account information required by the State Bar in the manner specified by the State Bar.

(e) The eligible institution shall be directed to do all of the following:

(1) To remit interest or dividends on the IOLTA account, less reasonable fees, to the State Bar, at least quarterly.

(2) To transmit to the State Bar with each remittance a statement showing the name of the attorney or law firm for which the remittance is sent, for each account the rate of interest applied or dividend paid, the amount and type of fees

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deducted, if any, and the average balance for each account for each month of the period for which the report is made.

(3) To transmit to the attorney or law firm customer at the same time a report showing the amount paid to the State Bar for that period, the rate of interest or dividend applied, the amount of fees and service charges deducted, if any, and the average daily account balance for each month of the period for which the report is made.

(f) An eligible institution has no affirmative duty to offer or make investment products available to IOLTA customers. However, if an eligible institution offers or makes investment products available to non-IOLTA customers, in order to remain an IOLTA-eligible institution, it shall make those products available to IOLTA customers or pay an interest rate on the IOLTA deposit account that is comparable to the rate of return or the dividends generally paid on that investment product for similar customers meeting the same minimum balance and other requirements applicable to the investment product. If the eligible institution elects to pay that higher interest rate, the eligible institution may subject the IOLTA deposit account to equivalent fees and charges assessable against the investment product. [See Appendix A for Supreme Court order pursuant to Statutes 1981, Chapter 789.] (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 2007, ch. 422; Stats. 2008, ch. 179; Stats. 2009, ch. 129.)

### § 6213 Definitions

As used in this article:

(a) “Qualified legal services project” means either of the following:

(1) A nonprofit project incorporated and operated exclusively in California that provides as its primary purpose and function legal services without charge to indigent persons and that has quality control procedures approved by the State Bar of California.

(2) A program operated exclusively in California by a nonprofit law school accredited by the State Bar of California that meets the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(A) The program shall have operated for at least two years at a cost of at least twenty

thousand dollars (\$20,000) per year as an identifiable law school unit with a primary purpose and function of providing civil legal services without charge to indigent persons.

(B) The program shall have quality control procedures approved by the State Bar of California.

(b) “Qualified support center” means an incorporated nonprofit legal services center that has as its primary purpose and function the provision of legal training, legal technical assistance, or advocacy support for civil legal services without charge and which actually provides through an office in California a significant level of legal training, legal technical assistance, or advocacy support without charge to qualified legal services projects on a statewide basis in California.

(c) “Recipient” means a qualified legal services project or support center receiving financial assistance under this article.

(d) “Indigent person” means a person whose income is (1) 200 percent or less of the current poverty threshold established by the United States Office of Management and Budget or (2) who is eligible for Supplemental Security Income or free services under the Older Americans Act or Developmentally Disabled Assistance Act. With regard to a project that provides free services of attorneys in private practice without compensation, “indigent person” also means a person whose income is 75 percent or less of the maximum levels of income for lower income households as defined in Section 50079.5 of the Health and Safety Code. For the purpose of this subdivision, the income of a person who is disabled shall be determined after deducting the costs of medical and other disability-related special expenses and (2) after deducting disability compensation from the United States Veterans Administration paid to a veteran with a service-related disability.

(e) “Fee generating case” means a case or matter that, if undertaken on behalf of an indigent person by an attorney in private practice, reasonably may be expected to result in payment of a fee for legal services from an award to a client, from public funds, or from the opposing party. A case shall not be considered fee generating if adequate representation is unavailable and any of the following circumstances exist:

(1) The recipient has determined that free referral is not possible because of any of the following reasons:

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- (A) The case has been rejected by the local lawyer referral service, or if there is no such service, by two attorneys in private practice who have experience in the subject matter of the case.
- (B) Neither the referral service nor any attorney will consider the case without payment of a consultation fee.
- (C) The case is of the type that attorneys in private practice in the area ordinarily do not accept, or do not accept without prepayment of a fee.
- (D) Emergency circumstances compel immediate action before referral can be made, but the client is advised that, if appropriate and consistent with professional responsibility, referral will be attempted at a later time.
- (2) Recovery of damages is not the principal object of the case and a request for damages is merely ancillary to an action for equitable or other nonpecuniary relief, or inclusion of a counterclaim requesting damages is necessary for effective defense or because of applicable rules governing joinder of counterclaims.
- (3) A court has appointed a recipient or an employee of a recipient pursuant to a statute or a court rule or practice of equal applicability to all attorneys in the jurisdiction.
- (4) The case involves the rights of a claimant under a publicly supported benefit program for which entitlement to benefit is based on need.
- (f) "Legal Services Corporation" means the Legal Services Corporation established under the federal Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-355; 42 U.S.C. Sec. 2996 et seq.).
- (g) "Older Americans Act" means the federal Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended (P.L. 89-73; 42 U.S.C. Sec. 3001 et seq.).
- (h) "Developmentally Disabled Assistance Act" means the federal Developmentally Disabled Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, as amended (P.L. 94-103; 42 U.S.C. Sec. 6001 et seq.).
- (i) "Supplemental security income recipient" means an individual receiving or eligible to receive payments under Title XVI of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1381 et seq.) or payments under Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 12000) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.
- (j) "IOLTA account" means an account or investment product established and maintained pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 6211 that is any of the following:
- (1) An interest-bearing checking account.
  - (2) An investment sweep product that is a daily (overnight) financial institution repurchase agreement or an open-end money market fund.
  - (3) An investment product authorized by California Supreme Court rule or order.
- A daily financial institution repurchase agreement shall be fully collateralized by United States Government Securities or other comparably conservative debt securities, and may be established only with any eligible institution that is "well-capitalized" or "adequately capitalized" as those terms are defined by applicable federal statutes and regulations. An open-end money market fund shall be invested solely in United States Government Securities or repurchase agreements fully collateralized by United States Government Securities or other comparably conservative debt securities, shall hold itself out as a "money market fund" as that term is defined by federal statutes and regulations under the federal Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. Sec. 80a-1 et seq.), and, at the time of the investment, shall have total assets of at least two hundred fifty million dollars (\$250,000,000).
- (k) "Eligible institution" means either of the following:
- (1) A bank, savings and loan, or other financial institution regulated by a federal or state agency that pays interest or dividends on the IOLTA account and carries deposit insurance from an agency of the federal government.
  - (2) Any other type of financial institution authorized by the California Supreme Court.
- (l) "Civil legal services" includes, in addition to matters traditionally considered civil, legal services related to expungements, record sealing or clearance proceedings not requiring a finding of factual innocence, and

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infractions. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 1984, ch. 784; Stats. 2007, ch. 422; Stats. 2008, ch. 179; Stats. 2009, ch. 129; Stats. 2010, ch. 328; Stats. 2021, ch. 688; Stats. 2021, ch. 723.)

### **§ 6214 Qualified Legal Service Projects**

(a) Projects meeting the requirements of subdivision (a) of Section 6213 which are funded either in whole or part by the Legal Services Corporation or with Older Americans Act funds shall be presumed qualified legal services projects for the purpose of this article.

(b) Projects meeting the requirements of subdivision (a) of Section 6213 but not qualifying under the presumption specified in subdivision (a) shall qualify for funds under this article if they meet all of the following additional criteria:

(1) They receive cash funds from other sources in the amount of at least twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) per year to support free legal representation to indigent persons.

(2) They have demonstrated community support for the operation of a viable ongoing program.

(3) They provide one or both of the following special services:

(A) The coordination of the recruitment of substantial numbers of attorneys in private practice to provide free legal representation to indigent persons or to qualified legal services projects in California.

(B) The provision of legal representation, training, or technical assistance on matters concerning special client groups, including the elderly, disabled persons, juveniles, disabled veterans, and non-English-speaking groups, or on matters of specialized substantive law important to the special client groups. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 2021, ch. 688.)

### **§ 6214.5 Law School Program—Date of Eligibility for Funding**

A law school program that meets the definition of a “qualified legal services project” as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 6213, and that applied to

the State Bar for funding under this article not later than February 17, 1984, shall be deemed eligible for all distributions of funds made under Section 6216. (Added by Stats. 1984, ch. 784.)

### **§ 6215 Qualified Support Centers**

(a) Support centers satisfying the qualifications specified in subdivision (b) of Section 6213 which were operating an office and providing services in California on December 31, 1980, shall be presumed to be qualified support centers for the purposes of this article.

(b) Support centers not qualifying under the presumption specified in subdivision (a) may qualify as a support center by meeting both of the following additional criteria:

(1) Meeting quality control standards established by the State Bar.

(2) Being deemed to be of special need by a majority of the qualified legal services projects. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789.)

### **§ 6216 Distribution of Funds**

The State Bar shall distribute all moneys received under the program established by this article for the provision of civil legal services to indigent persons. The funds first shall be distributed 18 months from the effective date of this article, or upon such a date, as shall be determined by the State Bar, that adequate funds are available to initiate the program. Thereafter, the funds shall be distributed on an annual basis. All distributions of funds shall be made in the following order and in the following manner:

(a) To pay the actual administrative costs of the program, including any costs incurred after the adoption of this article and a reasonable reserve therefor.

(b) Eighty-five percent of the funds remaining after payment of administrative costs allocated pursuant to this article shall be distributed to qualified legal services projects. Distribution shall be by a pro rata county-by-county formula based upon the number of persons whose income is 125 percent or less of the current poverty threshold per county. For the purposes of this section, the source of data identifying the number of persons per county shall be the latest available figures from the United States Department of Commerce,

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Bureau of the Census. Projects from more than one county may pool their funds to operate a joint, multicounty legal services project serving each of their respective counties.

- (1) (A) In any county which is served by more than one qualified legal services project, the State Bar shall distribute funds for the county to those projects which apply on a pro rata basis, based upon the amount of their total budget expended in the prior year for civil legal services without charge for indigent persons in that county as compared to the total expended in the prior year for civil legal services without charge for indigent persons by all qualified legal services projects applying therefor in the county.

(B) The State Bar shall reserve 10 percent of the funds allocated to the county for distribution to programs meeting the standards of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (3) and paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 6214 and which perform the services described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (3) of Section 6214 as their principal means of delivering civil legal services. The State Bar shall distribute the funds for that county to those programs which apply on a pro rata basis, based upon the amount of their total budget expended for free civil legal services for indigent persons in that county as compared to the total expended for free civil legal services for indigent persons by all programs meeting the standards of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (3) and paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 6214 in that county. The State Bar shall distribute any funds for which no program has qualified pursuant hereto, in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of this subdivision.

- (2) In any county in which there is no qualified legal services projects providing services, the State Bar shall reserve for the remainder of the fiscal year for distribution the pro rata share of funds as provided for by this article. Upon application of a qualified legal services project proposing to provide legal services to the indigent of the county, the State Bar shall distribute the funds to the project.

Any funds not so distributed shall be added to the funds to be distributed the following year.

- (c) Fifteen percent of the funds remaining after payment of administrative costs allocated for the purposes of this article shall be distributed equally by the State Bar to qualified support centers which apply for the funds. The funds provided to support centers shall be used only for the provision of civil legal services within California. Qualified support centers that receive funds to provide services to qualified legal services projects from sources other than this article, shall submit and shall have approved by the State Bar a plan assuring that the services funded under this article are in addition to those already funded for qualified legal services projects by other sources. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 1984, ch. 784; Stats. 2021, ch. 723.)

### **§ 6217 Maintenance of Quality Services, Professional Standards, Attorney-Client Privilege; Funds to be Expended in Accordance with Article; Interference with Attorney Prohibited**

With respect to the provision of legal assistance under this article, each recipient shall ensure all of the following:

- (a) The maintenance of quality service and professional standards.
- (b) The expenditure of funds received in accordance with the provisions of this article.
- (c) The preservation of the attorney-client privilege in any case, and the protection of the integrity of the adversary process from any impairment in furnishing legal assistance to indigent persons.
- (d) That no one shall interfere with any attorney funded in whole or in part by this article in carrying out his or her professional responsibility to his or her client as established by the rules of professional responsibility and this chapter. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789.)

### **§ 6218 Eligibility for Services; Establishment of Guidelines; Funds to be Expended in Accordance with Article**

All legal services projects and support centers receiving funds pursuant to this article shall adopt financial eligibility guidelines for indigent persons.

(a) Qualified legal services programs shall ensure that funds appropriated pursuant to this article shall be used solely to defray the costs of providing legal services to indigent persons or for such other purposes as set forth in this article.

(b) Funds received pursuant to this article by support centers shall only be used to provide services to qualified legal services projects as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 6213 which are used pursuant to a plan as required by subdivision (c) of Section 6216, or as permitted by Section 6219. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789.)

**§ 6219 Provisions of Work Opportunities and Scholarships for Disadvantaged Law Students**

Qualified legal services projects and support centers may use funds provided under this article for the following:

(a) To provide work opportunities with pay, and where feasible, scholarships for disadvantaged law students to help defray their law school expenses.

(b) To provide loan repayment assistance in accordance with a loan repayment assistance program administered by the California Access to Justice Commission for the purposes of recruiting and retaining attorneys who perform services as described in Section 6218 and permitted by Section 6223. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 2023, ch. 196.)

**§ 6220 Private Attorneys Providing Legal Services Without Charge; Support Center Services**

Attorneys in private practice who are providing legal services without charge to indigent persons shall not be disqualified from receiving the services of the qualified support centers. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789.)

**§ 6221 Services for Indigent Members of Disadvantaged and Underserved Groups**

Qualified legal services projects shall make significant efforts to utilize 20 percent of the funds allocated under this article for increasing the availability of services to the elderly, the disabled, juveniles, or other indigent persons who are members of disadvantaged and underserved groups within their service area. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789.)

**§ 6222 Financial Statements; Submission to State Bar; State Bar Report**

A recipient of funds allocated pursuant to this article annually shall submit a financial statement to the State Bar, including an audit of the funds by a certified public accountant or a fiscal review approved by the State Bar, a report demonstrating the programs on which they were expended, a report on the recipient's compliance with the requirements of Section 6217, and progress in meeting the service expansion requirements of Section 6221.

The Board of Trustees of the State Bar shall include a report of receipts of funds under this article, expenditures for administrative costs, and disbursements of the funds, on a county-by-county basis, in the annual report of State Bar receipts and expenditures required pursuant to Section 6145. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

**§ 6223 Expenditure of Funds; Prohibitions**

No funds allocated by the State Bar pursuant to this article shall be used for any of the following purposes:

(a) The provision of legal assistance with respect to any fee generating case, except in accordance with guidelines which shall be promulgated by the State Bar.

(b) The provision of legal assistance with respect to any criminal proceeding. For purposes of this article, "criminal proceeding" does not include expungements, record sealing or clearance proceedings not requiring a finding of factual innocence, or proceedings concerning infractions.

(c) The provision of legal assistance, except to indigent persons or except to provide support services to qualified legal services projects as defined by this article. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 2021, ch. 723.)

**§ 6224 State Bar; Powers; Determination of Qualifications to Receive Funds; Denial of Funds; Termination; Procedures**

The State Bar shall have the power to determine that an applicant for funding is not qualified to receive funding, to deny future funding, or to terminate existing funding

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because the recipient is not operating in compliance with the requirements or restrictions of this article.

A denial of an application for funding or for future funding or an action by the State Bar to terminate an existing grant of funds under this article shall not become final until the applicant or recipient has been afforded reasonable notice and an opportunity for a timely and fair hearing. Pending final determination of any hearing held with reference to termination of funding, financial assistance shall be continued at its existing level on a month-to-month basis. Hearings for denial shall be conducted by an impartial hearing officer whose decision shall be final. The hearing officer shall render a decision no later than 30 days after the conclusion of the hearing. Specific procedures governing the conduct of the hearings of this section shall be determined by the State Bar pursuant to Section 6225. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789.)

### **§ 6225 Implementation of Article; Adoption of Rules and Regulations; Procedures**

The Board of Trustees of the State Bar shall adopt the regulations and procedures necessary to implement this article and to ensure that the funds allocated herein are utilized to provide civil legal services to indigent persons, especially underserved client groups such as but not limited to the elderly, the disabled, juveniles, and non-English-speaking persons.

In adopting the regulations the Board of Trustees shall comply with the following procedures:

(a) The board shall publish a preliminary draft of the regulations and procedures, which shall be distributed, together with notice of the hearings required by subdivision (b), to commercial banking institutions, to licensees of the State Bar, and to potential recipients of funds.

(b) The board shall hold at least two public hearings, one in southern California and one in northern California where affected and interested parties shall be afforded an opportunity to present oral and written testimony regarding the proposed regulations and procedures. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6226 Implementation of Article; Resolution**

The program authorized by this article shall become operative only upon the adoption of a resolution by the Board of Trustees of the State Bar stating that regulations have been adopted pursuant to Section 6225 which conform the program to all applicable tax and banking statutes, regulations, and rulings. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

### **§ 6227 Credit of State Not Pledged**

Nothing in this article shall create an obligation or pledge of the credit of the State of California or of the State Bar of California. Claims arising by reason of acts done pursuant to this article shall be limited to the moneys generated hereunder. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789.)

### **§ 6228 Severability**

If any provision of this article or the application thereof to any group or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions or applications of this article which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this article are severable. (Added by Stats. 1981, ch. 789.)

## ARTICLE 15

### ATTORNEY DIVERSION AND ASSISTANCE ACT

#### **§ 6230 Legislative Intent**

It is the intent of the Legislature that the State Bar of California seek ways and means to identify and rehabilitate attorneys with impairment due to substance use or a mental health disorder affecting competency so that attorneys so afflicted may be treated and returned to the practice of law in a manner that will not endanger the public health and safety. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 129. Amended by Stats. 2019, ch. 698.)

#### **§ 6231 Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program Act**

(a) The board shall establish and administer an Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program, and shall establish a committee to oversee the operation of the

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program. The committee shall be comprised of 12 members who shall be appointed as follows:

(1) Six members appointed by the Board of Trustees, including the following:

(A) Two members who are licensed mental health professionals with knowledge and expertise in the identification and treatment of substance abuse and mental illness.

(B) One member who is a physician with knowledge and expertise in the identification and treatment of alcoholism and substance abuse.

(C) One member of the board of directors of a statewide nonprofit organization established for the purpose of assisting lawyers with alcohol or substance abuse problems, which has been in continuous operation for a minimum of five years.

(D) Two members who are attorneys, at least one of which is in recovery and has at least five years of continuous sobriety.

(2) Four members appointed by the Governor, including the following:

(A) Two members who are attorneys.

(B) Two members of the public.

(3) One member of the public appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

(4) One member of the public appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.

(b) Committee members shall serve terms of four years, and may be reappointed as many times as desired. The board shall stagger the terms of the initial members appointed.

(c) Subject to the approval of the board, the committee may adopt reasonable rules and regulations as may be necessary or advisable for the purpose of implementing and operating the program. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 129. Amended by Stats. 2011, ch. 417.)

### **§ 6232 Practices and Procedures; Program Admission; Obligations**

(a) The committee shall establish practices and procedures for the acceptance, denial, completion, or termination of attorneys in the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program, and may recommend rehabilitative criteria for adoption by the board for acceptance, denial, completion of, or termination from, the program.

(b) An attorney currently under investigation by the State Bar may enter the program in the following ways:

(1) By referral of the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel.

(2) By referral of the State Bar Court following the initiation of a disciplinary proceeding.

(3) Voluntarily, and in accordance with terms and conditions agreed upon by the attorney participant with the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel or upon approval by the State Bar Court, as long as the investigation is based primarily on the self-administration of drugs or alcohol or the illegal possession, prescription, or nonviolent procurement of drugs for self-administration, or on mental illness, and does not involve actual harm to the public or the attorney's clients. An attorney seeking entry under this paragraph may be required to execute an agreement that violations of this chapter, or other statutes that would otherwise be the basis for discipline, may nevertheless be prosecuted if the attorney is terminated from the program for failure to comply with program requirements.

(c) Neither acceptance into nor participation in the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program shall relieve the attorney of any lawful duties and obligations otherwise required by any agreements or stipulations with the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel, court orders, or applicable statutes relating to attorney discipline.

(d) An attorney who is not the subject of a current investigation may voluntarily enter, whether by self-referral or referral by a third-party, the diversion and assistance program on a confidential basis and that information shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code).

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Confidentiality pursuant to this subdivision shall be absolute unless waived by the attorney.

(e) By rules subject to the approval of the board and consistent with the requirements of this article, applicants who are in law school or have applied for admission to the State Bar may enter the program. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 129. Amended by Stats. 2015, ch. 537; Stats. 2017, ch. 422; Stats. 2021, ch. 615.)

### **§ 6233 Restrictions; Reinstatement**

An attorney entering the diversion and assistance program pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 6232 may be enrolled as an inactive licensee of the State Bar and not be entitled to practice law, or may be required to agree to various practice restrictions, including, where appropriate, restrictions on scope of practice and monetary accounting procedures. Upon the successful completion of the program, attorney participants who were placed on inactive status by the State Bar Court as a condition of program participation and who have complied with any and all conditions of probation may receive credit for the period of inactive enrollment towards any period of actual suspension imposed by the Supreme Court, and shall be eligible for reinstatement to active status and a dismissal of the underlying allegations or a reduction in the recommended discipline. Those attorneys who participated in the program with practice restrictions shall be eligible to have those restrictions removed and to a dismissal of the underlying allegations or a reduction in the recommended discipline. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 129. Amended by Stats. 2005, ch. 273; Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

### **§ 6234 Information Provided to or Obtained by Program; Limitations on Disclosure, Admissibility and Confidentiality**

Any information provided to or obtained by the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program, or any subcommittee or agent thereof, shall be as follows:

(a) Confidential and shall not be disclosed pursuant to any state law, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code). This confidentiality shall be absolute unless waived by the attorney.

(b) Exempt from the provisions of Section 6086.1.

(c) Not discoverable or admissible in any civil proceeding without the written consent of the attorney to whom the information pertains.

(d) Not discoverable or admissible in any disciplinary proceeding without the written consent of the attorney to whom the information pertains.

(e) Except with respect to the provisions of subdivision (d) of Section 6232, the limitations on the disclosure and admissibility of information in this section shall not apply to information relating to an attorney's noncooperation with, or unsuccessful completion of, the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program, or any subcommittee or agent thereof, or to information otherwise obtained by the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel, by independent means, or from any other lawful source. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 129. Amended by Stats. 2003, ch. 334; Stats. 2015, ch. 537; Stats. 2021, ch. 615.)

### **§ 6235 Expenses and Fees; Financial Assistance Program**

(a) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), participants in the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program shall be responsible for all expenses relating to treatment and recovery.

(2) Consistent with subdivision (b), funds collected pursuant to Section 6140.9 for the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program may be used for treatment and recovery services for participants who demonstrate an inability to pay. The State Bar shall develop rules or guidelines to implement this paragraph.

(3) In addition, the State Bar may charge a reasonable administrative fee to participants for the purpose of offsetting the costs of maintaining the program.

(b) (1) Notwithstanding paragraph (1) or (3) of subdivision (a), the State Bar shall establish a program to provide financial assistance to licensees and persons eligible for services who otherwise would be denied acceptance into the program solely due to the lack of ability to pay.

(2) The funding for financial assistance shall be drawn exclusively from the ten-dollar (\$10) fee paid by each active licensee under Section 6140.9

to support the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program.

(3) Notwithstanding the goal of providing financial assistance pursuant to paragraph (1), the amount of funding allocated for the purpose of providing financial assistance shall not be allowed to compromise the financial needs of effectively administering the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 129. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

#### **§ 6236 Outreach Activities**

The State Bar shall actively engage in outreach activities to make licensees, the legal community, and the general public aware of the existence and availability of the Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program. Outreach shall include, but not be limited to, the development and certification of minimum continuing legal education courses relating to behavioral health issues and the prevention, detection, and treatment of substance abuse, including no-cost and low-cost programs and materials pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 6070, informing all licensees of the State Bar of the program's existence and benefits through both direct communication and targeted advertising, working in coordination with the judicial branch to inform the state's judges of the program's existence and availability as a disciplinary option, and working in cooperation with organizations that provide services and support to attorneys with issues related to behavioral health or substance abuse. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 129. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659; Stats. 2022, ch. 419.)

#### **§ 6237 Effect on Disciplinary Authority**

It is the intent of the Legislature that the authorization of an Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program not be construed as limiting or altering the powers of the Supreme Court of this state to disbar or discipline licensees of the State Bar. (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 129. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6238** (Added by Stats. 2001, ch. 129. Repealed by Stats. 2023, ch. 697.)

### **ARTICLE 16 ATTORNEYS PROVIDING IMMIGRATION REFORM ACT SERVICES**

#### **§ 6240 Definitions**

For purposes of this article, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Immigration reform act" means either of the following:

(1) Any pending or future act of Congress that is enacted after October 5, 2013, that authorizes an undocumented immigrant who entered the United States without inspection, who did not depart after the expiration of a nonimmigrant visa, or who stayed beyond an authorized period, to attain a lawful status under federal law or to otherwise remain in the country. The State Bar shall announce and post on its Internet Web site when an immigration reform act has been enacted.

(2) The President's executive actions on immigration announced on November 20, 2014, or any future executive action or order that authorizes an undocumented immigrant who entered the United States without inspection, who did not depart after the expiration of a nonimmigrant visa, or who stayed beyond an approved period pursuant to a visa, to attain a lawful status under federal law or to otherwise remain in the country. The State Bar shall announce and post on its Internet Web site when an executive action or order has been issued.

(b) (1) "Immigration reform act services" means services offered in connection with an immigration reform act that are exclusively for the purpose of preparing an application and other related initial processes in order for an undocumented immigrant, who entered the United States without inspection, who did not depart after the expiration of a nonimmigrant visa, or who stayed beyond an approved period pursuant to a visa, to attain a lawful status under federal law or to otherwise remain in the country

(2) Immigration reform act services do not include services that have an independent value apart from the preparation of an application pursuant to an immigration reform act and other related initial processes, including, but not limited

to, assisting a client in preventing removal from the United States, preventing any other adverse action related to the ability to remain in the United States, including pending legal action, and achieving postconviction relief from prior criminal convictions. (Added by Stats. 2013, ch. 574. Amended by Stats. 2015, ch. 6, effective June 17, 2015.)

**§ 6241 Applicability of Article**

This article shall apply to the following:

- (a) An attorney who is an active licensee of the State Bar who provides immigration reform act services.
- (b) An attorney who is not an active licensee of the State Bar, but who meets both of the following:
  - (1) The attorney is authorized by federal law to practice law and to represent persons before the Board of Immigration Appeals or the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.
  - (2) The attorney is providing immigration reform act services in an office or business in California. (Added by Stats. 2013, ch. 574. Amended by Stats. 2018, ch. 659.)

**§ 6242 Immigration Reform Act Services; Refunding of Advance Payment; Statement of Accounting**

- (a) It is unlawful for an attorney to demand or accept the advance payment of any funds from a person for immigration reform act services in connection with any of the following:
  - (1) An immigration reform act as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 6240, before the enactment of that act, when the relevant form or application is released or announced and is not subject to any pending legal action, or when the acceptance date of the relevant form or application has been announced, whichever is sooner.
  - (2) (A) Requests for expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) under an immigration reform act as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 6240, before the date the United States

Citizenship and Immigration Services begins accepting those requests.

(B) Requests for Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) under an immigration reform act as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 6240, before the date the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services begins accepting those requests.

(C) Any relief offered under any executive action announced or executive order issued, on or after the effective date of the act adding this subparagraph, that authorizes an undocumented immigrant who either entered the United States without inspection or who did not depart after the expiration of a nonimmigrant visa to attain a lawful status under federal law, before the executive action or order has been implemented and the relief is available.

(b) Any advance payment of funds for immigration reform act services that was received after October 5, 2013, but before the enactment or implementation of the immigration reform act for which the services were sought, shall be refunded to the client promptly, but no later than 30 days after the receipt of the funds or placed into a client trust account, which must be returned or utilized under the provisions of the act amending this subdivision no later than January 20, 2017.

- (c) (1) If an attorney providing immigration reform act services accepted funds for immigration reform act services prior to the effective date of this amendment to this section, and the services to be performed in connection with payment of those funds were rendered, the attorney shall promptly, but no later than 30 days after the effective date of this amendment to this section, provide the client with a statement of accounting describing the services rendered.
- (2) (A) Any funds received before the effective date of this amendment to this section for which immigration reform act services were not rendered prior to the effective date of this amendment to this section shall be either refunded to the client or deposited in a client trust account.

## STATE BAR ACT

(B) If an attorney deposits funds in a client trust account pursuant to this paragraph, he or she shall provide a written notice, in both English and the client's native language, informing the client of the following:

(i) That there are no benefits or relief available, and that no application for such benefits or relief may be processed, until enactment or implementation of an immigration reform act and the related necessary federal regulations or forms, and that, commencing with the effective date of this amendment to this section, it is unlawful for an attorney to demand or accept the advance payment of any funds from a person for immigration reform act services before the enactment or implementation of an immigration reform act.

(ii) That he or she may report complaints to the Executive Office for Immigration Review of the United States Department of Justice, to the State Bar of California, or to the bar of the court of any state, possession, territory, or commonwealth of the United States or of the District of Columbia where the attorney is admitted to practice law. The notice shall include the toll-free telephone numbers and Internet Web sites of those entities. (Added by Stats. 2013, ch. 574. Amended by Stats. 2015, ch. 6, effective June 17, 2015.)

### **§ 6243 Written Contract for Legal Services; Reporting of Complaints; Languages for Form of Notice; Failure to Comply**

(a) (1) When a contract for legal services is required in writing pursuant to Section 6148, or is subject to Section 1632 of the Civil Code, an attorney providing immigration reform act services shall provide a written notice informing the client that he or she may report complaints to the Executive Office for Immigration Review of the United States Department of Justice, to the State Bar of California, or to the bar of the court of any state, possession, territory, or commonwealth of the United States or of the District of Columbia where the attorney is admitted to practice law. The notice

shall include the toll-free telephone numbers and Internet Web sites of those entities.

(2) The notice shall be in English and in one of the languages of the forms translated by the State Bar pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (b), if the contract for immigration reform act services was negotiated in one of those languages.

(3) The notice shall be attached or incorporated into any written contract for immigration reform act services. If the notice is attached to a written contract, it shall be signed by both the attorney and the client.

(b) (1) The State Bar shall provide the form of the notice required in subdivision (a) and shall post the form and translations on its Internet Web site. The State Bar shall translate the form into the following languages: Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, Armenian, Persian, Japanese, Russian, Hindi, Arabic, French, Punjabi, Portuguese, Mon-Khmer, Hmong, Thai, Gujarati. The State Bar, upon request, may translate the forms into other languages.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), an attorney providing immigration reform act services who meets the criteria of subdivision (b) of Section 6241 shall be responsible for adding and translating the name of, toll-free telephone number of, and information on the Internet Web site for, the bar of the court of any state, possession, territory, or commonwealth of the United States or the District of Columbia in which he or she is admitted to practice law.

(c) Failure to comply with any provision of this section renders the contract voidable at the option of the client, and the attorney shall, upon the contract being voided, be entitled to collect a reasonable fee.

(d) This section shall become operative when the State Bar posts on its Internet Web site the form and translations required by paragraph (1) of subdivision (b). The State Bar shall post the form and translations as soon as practicable, but no later than 45 days after the effective date of this section. (Added by Stats. 2013, ch. 574.)

**ARTICLE 17**  
**THE CALIFORNIA CONSUMER LEGAL FUNDING**  
**ACT**

**§ 6250 Definitions**

(a) “Charges” means the amount of money to be paid to the consumer legal funding company by or on behalf of the consumer, above the funded amount provided by or on behalf of the company to a California consumer pursuant to this article. Charges include all administrative, origination, underwriting, or other fees, including interest, no matter how denominated. Those charges shall not exceed 36 months from the funding date.

(b) “Consumer” means a natural person who has a pending legal claim and who resides or is domiciled in California.

(c) “Consumer legal funding” means a nonrecourse transaction in which a consumer legal funding company purchases and a consumer assigns to the company a contingent right to receive an amount of the potential proceeds of a settlement, judgment, award, or verdict obtained in the consumer’s legal claim.

(d) “Consumer legal funding company” means a person or entity that enters into a consumer legal funding contract with a consumer. A consumer legal company shall not include any of the following:

(1) An immediate family member of the consumer.

(2) A bank, lender, or other special purpose entity that is engaged in either of the following:

(A) Provides financing to a consumer legal funding company.

(B) Receives a security interest or transfer of rights from a consumer legal funding company.

(3) An attorney or accountant who provides services to a consumer.

(e) “Funded amount” means the amount of moneys provided to, or on behalf of, the consumer through a transaction meeting the definition of consumer legal funding.

(f) “Funding date” means the date on which the funded amount is transferred to the consumer by the consumer legal funding company either by personal delivery, wire, automated clearing house, or other electronic means, or mailed by insured, certified, or registered United States mail.

(g) “Immediate family member” means a parent, sibling, child by blood, adoption, or marriage, spouse, domestic partner, cohabitant, stepchild, immediate in-law, aunt, uncle, first cousin, grandparent, or grandchild.

(h) “Legal claim” means a bona fide civil claim or cause of action.

(i) “Resolution date” means the date the funded amount, plus the agreed upon charges, are delivered to the consumer legal funding company by the consumer or the consumer’s attorney.

(j) Nothing in this article shall apply to support legal services rendered to an attorney regarding the legal claim. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 565.)

**§ 6251 Consumer Legal Funding Contracts;**  
**Required Terms**

(a) (1) All consumer legal funding transactions shall be codified in a written contract.

(2) If the consumer legal funding contract was negotiated in a language other than English, the consumer shall be provided a copy of the contract in both English and the language in which the contract was negotiated.

(b) All contracts codifying a consumer legal funding transaction shall meet the following requirements:

(1) The contract shall be drafted in plain English such that the average consumer can read and understand the terms of the contract without having to obtain the assistance of a professional.

(2) All contract terms shall be contained in the agreement when first presented to the consumer.

(3) The contract shall contain a right of rescission allowing the consumer to cancel the contract without penalty or further obligation if, within five business days after the funding date, the consumer returns all funds disbursed by the consumer legal funding company.

(4) The contract requires the consumer to initial receipt of every page of the agreement.

(5) The contract contains a statement that there shall be no fees or charges to be paid by the consumer other than what is disclosed in the contract.

(6) The contract contains a statement of the maximum amount the consumer may be obligated to pay under the contract other than in a case of material breach, fraud, or misrepresentation by or on behalf of the consumer.

(7) The contract contains a clear statement of how charges, including any applicable fees, are incurred or accrued.

(c) The contract shall contain a written acknowledgement by an attorney retained by the consumer attesting to the following:

(1) The attorney has reviewed the disclosures specified in Section 6252 with the consumer.

(2) The attorney is being compensated on a contingency basis pursuant to a written agreement.

(3) All proceeds of the legal claim will be disbursed through the attorney's client trust account or a separate settlement fund established to receive the proceeds of the legal claim on behalf of the consumer.

(4) The attorney agrees to disburse funds from the legal claim in accordance with the contract and take any steps necessary to ensure that the terms of the litigation funding contract are fulfilled.

(5) A statement that the attorney has not received a referral fee or other consideration from the consumer legal funding company in connection with the contract and that the attorney will not receive future fees or consideration from the legal funding company.

(d) The absence of the acknowledgement required by subdivision (c) shall render the consumer legal funding transaction and associated contract null and void.

(e) Notwithstanding subdivision (d), a contract for a consumer legal funding transaction shall remain valid and enforceable in the event the consumer terminates the attorney who made the attestation required pursuant to subdivision (c).

(f) Notwithstanding any other law, a provision of the contract for a consumer legal funding transaction shall not impose a prepayment penalty on a consumer. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 565.)

**§ 6252 Required Contract Disclosures; Notice of Legal Claim Outcome**

(a) All contracts for a consumer legal funding transaction shall disclose material terms to the consumer, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(1) Clear and conspicuous language, on the first page of the contract, detailing all of the following:

(A) The funded amount to be paid to the consumer by the consumer legal funding company upon the completion of litigation.

(B) An itemization of any one-time charges.

(C) The maximum total amount to be assigned by the consumer to the consumer litigation funding company, including the funded amount and all charges.

(D) A repayment schedule, including the dates in which all payments are due to the consumer litigation funding company.

(2) A disclosure stating, "Consumer's right to cancellation: You may cancel this contract without penalty or further obligation within five business days after the funding date if you return to the consumer legal funding company the full amount of the disbursed funds."

(3) (A) A disclosure stating that the consumer legal funding company shall have no role in deciding whether, when, or for what dollar amount a legal claim may be settled.

(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), the consumer legal funding company may seek updated information about the status of the legal claim.

(b) All contracts for a consumer legal funding transaction shall require the consumer or the consumer's attorney to notify the consumer legal funding company of the outcome of the legal claim, including, but not limited to, all settlements, verdicts, or

other means of dispute resolution. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 565.)

### **§ 6253 Determination of Contracted Repayment Amount**

The contracted amount to be paid to the consumer legal funding company shall be a predetermined amount based upon intervals of time from the funding date through the resolution date, and shall not be determined as a percentage of the recovery from the legal claim. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 565.)

### **§ 6254 Prohibited Conduct; Civil Liability and Remedies**

(a) A consumer legal funding company shall be prohibited from doing any of the following:

- (1) Paying or offering to pay commissions, referral fees, or other forms of consideration to any attorney, law firm, or any of their employees for referring a consumer to the company.
- (2) Accepting any commissions, referral fees, rebates, or other forms of consideration from an attorney, law firm, or any of their employees.
- (3) Intentionally providing a consumer materially false or misleading information regarding its products or services.
- (4) (A) Referring, in furtherance of legal funding, a customer or potential customer to a specific attorney, law firm, or any of their employees.  
  
(B) Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall prevent a consumer legal funding company from referring a consumer to a publicly available attorney referral service operated by a local bar association of the State Bar of California.
- (5) Providing funding to a consumer who has previously assigned or sold portions of the consumer's right to proceeds from the consumer's legal claim without first making payment to satisfy that assignment if the consumer legal funding company knew or should have known that the consumer had assigned or sold a portion of their

rights to the proceeds of the consumer's legal claim.

(6) Receiving any right to, or making, any decisions with respect to the conduct of the underlying legal claim or any settlement or resolution thereof.

(7) Attempting to obtain a waiver of any remedy or right by the consumer, including, but not limited to, the right to trial by jury.

(8) Paying or offering to pay for court costs, filing fees, or attorney's fees either during or after the resolution of the legal claim, using funds from the consumer legal funding transaction.

(9) Offering consumer legal funding on the condition that a consumer that is represented by counsel terminate that representation and adopt counsel recommended by the consumer legal funding company.

(10) Knowingly assisting a lawyer or law firm that is enticing or intends to entice a consumer to bring a claim that the company knows or has reason to know is fabricated or otherwise not brought in good faith.

(b) Any legal funding company that engages in conduct that is prohibited by subdivision (a) shall be liable for all of the following:

- (1) Automatic termination of the contract for the consumer legal funding transaction.
- (2) Statutory damages not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) per violation or three times the actual damages incurred by the consumer, whichever is greater.
- (3) Attorney's costs and fees.
- (4) Injunctive or declaratory relief.

(c) In assessing the amount of statutory damages to be set pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), the court shall consider any one or more of the relevant circumstances presented by any of the parties to the case, including, but not limited to, the nature and seriousness of the misconduct, the number of violations, the persistence of the misconduct, the length of time over which the misconduct occurred, the willfulness of the defendant's misconduct, and the defendant's assets, liabilities, and net worth. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 565.)

**§ 6255 Assignment of Contingent Rights to Legal Claim Proceeds**

The contingent right to receive an amount of the potential proceeds of a legal claim is assignable by a consumer. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 565.)

(e) Any attorney who violates this section shall be subject to discipline by the State Bar of California. (Added by Stats. 2025, ch. 565.)

**§ 6256 Attorney Conduct and Financial Interests in Consumer Legal Funding; Discipline**

(a) An attorney, or the attorney's immediate family, retained by a consumer shall not have a financial interest in a consumer legal funding company offering consumer legal funding, and shall not provide consumer legal funding directly to a consumer.

(b) Any attorney who has referred the consumer to the consumer's retained attorney shall not have a financial interest in a consumer legal funding company offering consumer legal funding to that consumer.

(c) An attorney retained by a consumer shall not disclose any privileged information to a legal funding company without the written consent of the consumer. Disclosing information to a legal funding company at the consumer's request shall not otherwise void the attorney-client privilege.

(d) An attorney shall not compensate, promise, or give anything of value to a person for the purpose of recommending or securing the services of the attorney or the attorney's law firm, except that an attorney may do the following:

- (1) Pay the reasonable costs of advertisements or communications permitted by Rule 7.2 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct, or any successor rule.
- (2) Pay the usual charges of a legal services plan or a qualified attorney referral service operating in accordance with the rules established by the state bar.
- (3) Pay for a law practice operating in accordance with Rule 1.17 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct, or any successor rule.
- (4) Refer clients to another attorney or a nonlawyer professional pursuant to an arrangement not otherwise prohibited by the California Rules of Professional Conduct or this chapter.