

From:

Arizona Asian American Bar Association

Arizona Black Bar

Arizona Minority Bar Association

Arizona Women Lawyers Association

Los Abogados Hispanic Bar Association

To the Arizona Supreme Court:

The bar associations listed above jointly write to oppose the Rule 32 petition filed by Warren Petersen and Ben Toma, which seeks to eliminate the State Bar of Arizona's ability to fund non-regulatory activities.

These partner bars seek to advance diversity, equality, and justice in the Arizona legal community and to create meaningful professional development opportunities for our respective members¹. The State Bar of Arizona provides essential support to these numerous partner bars by enabling attorneys from all different backgrounds to network and collaborate.

The proposed rule change would eliminate the State Bar's ability to carry out its mission as mandated by the Arizona Supreme Court. If the petition is approved, it would eliminate the State Bar's role in organizing and promoting activities that fulfill the Bar's responsibilities to the legal profession and the public. It would undermine programs that help legal professionals in their practice, which in turn protect the public by ensuring the Bar's members are equipped to carry out their duties as lawyers in an ethical manner. And most importantly, it would eliminate the Bar's role in promoting access to justice for Arizonans, a cause that the Arizona Supreme Court has worked to address over the last few years.

The State Bar also provides other tremendous benefits to Arizonans. The State Bar improves access to competent and ethical legal professionals by hosting free legal service events for Arizonans who cannot afford a lawyer. The Bar also provides resources and assistance to partner bar organizations, supports diversity initiatives, and develops continuing education programs all of which serve to improve the legal profession and the Arizona community as a whole. The State Bar of Arizona's Bar Leadership Institute has also been instrumental over the last eighteen years by successfully providing leadership and skills training to Arizona lawyers. Multiple BLI graduates have gone on to hold various influential leadership roles within the Arizona legal community.

The State Bar's mission is to protect the public by improving the competency, ethics, and professionalism of lawyers practicing in Arizona. This petition will compromise that mission. The State Bar of Arizona provides significant value to our community beyond discipline. This petition does

¹ Membership to these partner bars is open to all who wish to join irrespective of how they might identify.

nothing to enhance the Arizona legal profession and would only harm Arizona's lawyers and the Arizona public.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that the Court deny the petition.

Christopher Heo, Ex-Officio
Arizona Asian American Bar Association

Sam Brown, President
Arizona Black Bar

Matt Scarber, President
Arizona Minority Bar Association

Lauren R.G. Talkington, President
Arizona Women Lawyers Association

Adriana Genco, President
Los Abogados Hispanic Bar Association