Supreme Court of Florida

No. SC2025-1178

IN RE: AMENDMENTS TO RULES REGULATING THE FLORIDA BAR – MISCELLANEOUS PETITION.

October 22, 2026

PER CURIAM.

The Florida Bar has filed a petition proposing amendments to Rules Regulating The Florida Bar 1-3.7 (Reinstatement to Membership), 1-12.1 (Amendment to Rules; Authority; Notice; Procedures; Comments), 4-7.20 (Exemptions from the Filing and Review Requirement), 6-12.7 (Confidentiality), 10-2.1 (Generally), 11-1.8 (Practice after Graduation), 20-5.2 (Duty to Update), and Bylaw 2-3.11 (Electronic Meetings).[1]

The Florida Bar's Board of Governors approved the proposed amendments. The Bar published the proposed amendments for

1. We have jurisdiction. *See* art. V, § 15, Fla. Const.; *see also* R. Regulating Fla. Bar 1-12.1.

comment, and five comments were received regarding the proposed amendments to rule 4-7.20. The Bar filed a response.

Having considered the Bar's petition, the comments, and the Bar's response, we amend the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar as proposed by the Bar, with some minor revisions. The more significant amendments are discussed below.

We amend Bylaw 2-3.11 to clarify that The Florida Bar, its Board of Governors, board committees, sections, divisions, and standing and special committees are authorized to conduct votes by email or other electronic polling in exigent circumstances.

Also, we amend rule 4-7.20 to exempt sponsored search engine results that do not include images, audio, or video other than the permissible content of advertisements in rule 4-7.16 from the filing requirements for advertisements of rule 4-7.19.

Next, we amend rule 6-12.7 to further clarify that files, records, and proceedings of the board of legal specialization and education related to or arising from a member's failure to satisfy the basic skills course requirements will remain confidential until the proceedings are concluded and may not be disclosed except in furtherance of the duties of the board of legal specialization and

education, on the written request of the member or as introduced in evidence or otherwise produced during the proceedings.

Furthermore, we amend rule 20-5.2 to require Florida registered paralegals whose registration becomes ineligible for renewal to notify their employing or supervising lawyer of any change in their registration status.

Finally, we decline to amend rule 1-12.1 as proposed by the Bar at this time.

Accordingly, the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar are amended as reflected in the appendix to this opinion. New language is indicated by underscoring. The amendments shall become effective immediately.

It is so ordered.

COURIEL, C.J., and LABARGA, MUÑIZ, GROSSHANS, FRANCIS, and BARRIOS, JJ., concur.
TANENBAUM, J., concurs in part and dissents in part with an opinion.

THE FILING OF A MOTION FOR REHEARING SHALL NOT ALTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THESE AMENDMENTS.

TANENBAUM, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part.

In addition to the other changes adopted by the court, I would

adopt the proposed new subdivision Rule Regulating The Florida Bar 1-12.1(h).

Original Proceeding – Florida Rules Regulating The Florida Bar

Michael Fox Orr, President, Paige Greenlee, President-elect, Joshua E. Doyle, Executive Director, Elizabeth Clark Tarbert, Division Director, Lawyer Regulation, and Kelly N. Smith, Senior Attorney, The Florida Bar, Tallahassee, Florida,

for Petitioner

Eddie Farah on behalf of Farah and Farah, Jacksonville, Florida; Brian F. LaBovick on behalf of LaBovick & LaBovick, P.A., Palm Beach Gardens, Florida; Steven Bell on behalf of Meltzer & Bell, P.A., West Palm Beach, Florida; Chris Speziok and Carey Meldon on behalf of Meldon Law, Gainesville, Florida; and Timothy P. Chinaris, Rockledge, Florida,

Responding with comments

APPENDIX

RULE 1-3.7. REINSTATEMENT TO MEMBERSHIP

(a) Eligibility for Reinstatement. Members who have retired from the bar or been delinquent for less than 5 years are eligible for reinstatement under this rule. Time will be calculated from the date of the retirement from the bar or delinquency.

Inactive members may also seek reinstatement under this rule.

(b) Petitions Required. A member seeking reinstatement must file a petition with the executive director setting forth the reason for inactive status, retirement from the bar, or delinquency and showing good cause why the petition for reinstatement should be granted. The petitioner must include all required information on a form approved by the board of governors. The petition must be accompanied by a nonrefundable reinstatement fee of $150 and payment of all arrearages unless adjusted by the executive director with concurrence of the executive committee for good cause shown. Inactive members are not required to pay the reinstatement fee. No member will be reinstated if, from the petition or from investigation conducted, the petitioner is not of good moral character and morally fit to practice law or if the member is delinquent with the continuing legal education or basic skills course requirements, except that the executive director has discretion to waive or extend the time period to complete continuing legal education or basic skills course requirements on a showing of undue hardship.

If the executive director is in doubt as to approval of a petition, the executive director may refer the petition to the board of governors for its action. Action of the executive director or board of governors denying a petition for reinstatement may be reviewed on petition to the Supreme Court of Florida.

(c) Members Who Have Retired or Been Delinquent for Less Than 5 Years, But More Than 3 Years. Members who have retired from the bar or been delinquent for less than 5 years, but more than 3 years, must complete 10 hours of continuing legal

education courses for each year or portion of a year that the member had retired or was deemed delinquent.

(d) Members Who Have Retired or Been Delinquent for 5 Years or More. ~~Members~~The membership of a member who ~~have~~has been retired from the bar or ~~have~~has been deemed delinquent for 5 years or more will lapse; the member will not be reinstated under this rule; and the member ~~must~~may be readmitted only on application to the Florida Board of Bar Examiners and approval by the Supreme Court of Florida.

(e)-(g) [No Change]

BYLAW 2-3.11. ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

Electronic meetings are authorized for all meetings of The Florida Bar; its board of governors; the executive committee and committees of its board of governors; and its sections, divisions, and committees. Special rules of order pertaining to the conduct of electronic meetings may be adopted by the board of governors. The Florida Bar and its board of governors, board committees, sections, divisions, and standing and special committees are also authorized to conduct votes, without meeting, via e-mail or other electronic polling only if there is an emergency, if necessary to meet an impending deadline, to confirm a matter of consensus, or on a matter that is solely related to committee procedures. If 10% of the members entitled to vote on the matter request a meeting in lieu of an electronic vote, voting must be suspended and a meeting scheduled to hear the matter.

RULE 4-7.20. EXEMPTIONS FROM THE FILING AND REVIEW REQUIREMENT

The following are exempt from the filing requirements of rule 4-7.19:

(a)-(f) [No Change]

(g) information contained on the lawyer's Internet website(s); ~~and~~

(h) advertisements and other communications regarding legal services made by or on behalf of a legal aid organization, which is a not-for-profit business entity as defined elsewhere in these rules; and

(i) sponsored search engine results that do not include any images, audio, or video other than the permissible content of advertisements set forth in Rule 4-7.16.

RULE 6-12.7. CONFIDENTIALITY

~~The files and records maintained regarding appeals and hearings conducted under this rule are confidential until the time for the appeals process has ended. If a member is deemed delinquent under this rule, that fact is public information.~~ The files, records, and proceedings of the board of legal specialization and education related to or arising from any failure of a member to satisfy the basic skills course requirements will remain confidential until the proceedings are concluded and may not be disclosed except in the furtherance of the duties of the board of legal specialization and education, on the written request of the member or as introduced in evidence or otherwise produced in proceedings under these rules, unless directed otherwise by the Supreme Court of Florida. Nothing in this rule prohibits The Florida Bar from advising that a member is not eligible to practice law for failure to meet basic skills course requirements.

RULE 10-2.1. GENERALLY

Whenever used in these rules, the following words or terms have the following meaning unless the use of the word or term clearly indicates a different meaning:

(a)-(n) [No Change]

(*o*) Filing. Any reference to filing with the court means in an electronic format approved by the court, unless excused from electronic filing by the court.

RULE 11-1.8. PRACTICE AFTER GRADUATION

(a) Certification. A law student at an accredited law school in Florida who has applied for admission to The Florida Bar, passed a criminal fingerprint check conducted by the Florida Board of Bar Examiners or received an initial clearance letter as to character and fitness from the Florida Board of Bar Examiners, completed a law school practice program awarding a minimum of 3 semester credit hours or the equivalent or requiring at least 200 hours of actual participation in the program, and whose law school dean has withdrawn certification for the program may make appearances for any of the same supervisory authorities under the same circumstances and restrictions that were applicable to students in law school programs under this chapter if the supervising lawyer:

(1)-(3) [No Change]

(b) Certification of Law School Graduates. A graduate of an accredited law school who has filed an application to The Florida Bar and passed a criminal fingerprint check conducted by the Florida Board of Bar Examiners or received an initial clearance letter as to character and fitness from the Florida Board of Bar Examiners may appear for the maximum term of certification of 18 months from graduation for the same entities and under the same restrictions that apply to students in law school practice programs under this chapter if the supervising lawyer:

(1) [No Change]

(2) files the Florida Board of Bar Examiner's acknowledgment of the applicant's passage of a criminal fingerprint check or initial clearance letter of the applicant as to character and fitness; and

(3) [No Change]

(c)-(e) [No Change]

RULE 20-5.2. DUTY TO UPDATE

An individual applying for registration as a Florida Registered Paralegal or who is registered as a Florida Registered Paralegal has a duty to inform The Florida Bar promptly of any fact or circumstance that would render the individual ineligible for registration or renewal, and ~~The Florida Bar~~the Florida Registered Paralegal will notify the employing or supervising lawyer as defined elsewhere in this chapter of any changes to the registration status.