



*The*  
**DISCIPLINARY BOARD**  
*of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania*

**March 2024**  
**Newsletter**



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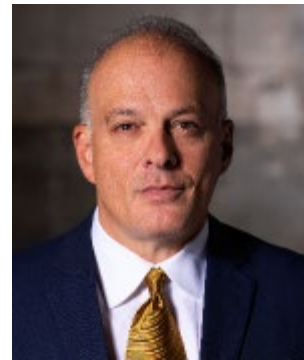
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## *From the Chair*

Earlier this year, former Chair Jerry Lehocky and I celebrated our retirement, marking the unofficial conclusion of our service to the Disciplinary Board. Together, Jerry and I have twenty-seven years of service to the disciplinary process in Pennsylvania. Yes, you read that correctly: twenty-seven years. We volunteered twenty-seven years' worth of professional time because serving in Pennsylvania's disciplinary process was and always will be incredibly gratifying and fulfilling. Helping clients who've been wronged and helping lawyers who need guidance, all in the context of a process that is very unique and very fair (*See my newsletter article from [May 2023](#)*.), is the professional gift we all give to one another.



In 2019, I started my second year on the Board and was asked to serve as Chair of the Rules Committee. I did so for three years. At that time, I had a lot of catching up to do as we considered various rule changes to recommend to our Supreme Court. As part of that process, I welcomed the opportunity to speak with the Disciplinary Board equivalents in many other states. I was surprised and very proud to learn how many other states try to emulate the Pennsylvania system and how many leaders from other states were amazed about how our system is almost entirely a volunteer army. Some states have a disciplinary process that runs through a self-contained and employee-paid system; our process in Pennsylvania is run from the ground up through its many volunteers.

Serving on the Disciplinary Board has been an unbelievable privilege and honor. It is certainly one of the highlights of any professional career. I urge all of you to get involved with the process, and I promise you it will be worth your time and commitment. For those of you who are so inclined, please consider applying to serve our profession as a Hearing Committee Member or to become a member of the Disciplinary Board. Get on the list! Hearing Committee Members play a vital role in the disciplinary system, and it's a great way to make new friends while learning all of the applicable rules that govern your practice. The Disciplinary Board needs the support of community-minded, collaborative, and diverse volunteers to protect the public, maintain the integrity of the legal profession, and safeguard the reputation of our courts.

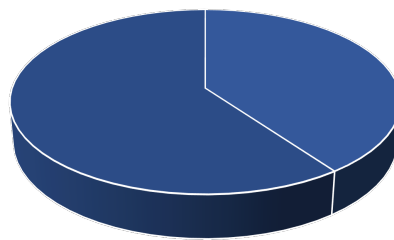
To all of those dedicated hearing officers I have served with starting in 2010 up through these current, amazing, and brilliant Board Members who now continue onward, with the help of the great Board staff, I extend my gratitude and admiration. To our Supreme Court who guides and leads all 75,000 of us, I express my heartfelt thanks for this opportunity.

Finally, and for one last time, remember that your Disciplinary Board is here to help, not hurt, Pennsylvania lawyers.

Dion G. Rassias  
Board Chair

## *Discipline Imposed*

**February 2024**



- Informal Admonition - 0
- Private Reprimand - 0
- Public Reprimand - 0
- Public Censure - 0
- Disability Inactive - 0
- Temporary Suspension - 0
- Suspension - 2
- Disbarment - 3

### **Suspension**

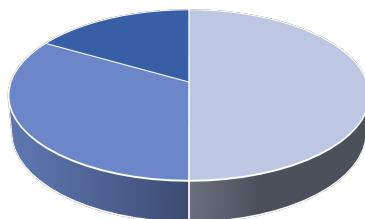
[Conrad Benedetto](#)  
[Joseph M. Yablonski](#)

### **Disbarment**

[John Anthony Bellino](#)  
[Thomas Patrick Connelly, Jr.](#)  
[Christopher M. Manganello](#)

## *Reinstatements*

**February 2024**



- From Inactive - 3
- From Retired - 0
- From Administrative Suspension - 2
- From Disability Inactive - 0
- From Suspension - 1
- From Disbarment - 0
- Reinstatement Denied - 0

**From Inactive**

[Darryl W. Cunningham](#)

[Kyle Daniel Eisenmann](#)

[Emily Helen Lucking](#)

**From Administrative Suspension**

[Vahan Shahab Minassian](#)

[Kelly R. Wetzel](#)

**From Suspension**

[David Addison Grant Murray](#)

*Note: The above-listed granted reinstatement matters reflect only those granted by Supreme Court Order. An attorney listed as reinstatement granted, but whose current license status does not reflect reinstatement, has yet to submit the fees necessary to finalize reinstatement.*

## *Disciplinary Board News*

### **Disciplinary Board Publishes 2023 Annual Report**

The Disciplinary Board has published its [Annual Report for 2023](#).

*Some highlights from the report:*

In 2023, the Board adjudicated nineteen matters: nine discipline cases and ten reinstatement matters. The Supreme Court issued orders in thirteen adjudicated matters, adopting the Board's recommendation in all of them.

The Supreme Court adopted three amendments to rules, including comprehensive amendments to the rules relating to attorney registration and assessment, administrative suspension, and administrative status changes.

In 2023, the Board published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* three Notices of Proposed Rulemaking seeking public comment and three sets of amendments to the Disciplinary Board Rules and Procedures.

The Board's Communications Committee adopted multiple enhancements to the Board's website. Among other things, such enhancements include:

- a new ["Lawyer Well-Being" webpage](#);
- a new ["Conservatorships" webpage](#); and
- a more direct route of access for Hearing Committee Members to relevant review and hearing materials.

The Finance and Budget Committee reported that the Board had an operating income surplus in 2022-2023. This was the first surplus the Board achieved since 2016-2017. The annual fee for active attorneys for the 2023-2024 registration year is \$275 which is shared as follows: \$195 to the Disciplinary Board, \$50 to the Pennsylvania Lawyers Fund for Client Security, and \$30 to the IOLTA Board. The Disciplinary Board carries outstanding liabilities in the form of unpaid taxed expenses and administrative fees in the amount of \$1,716,859.

The Board reported that 144 individuals served as Hearing Committee Members in 2023. Their accomplishments include:

- eighty-one complaint dispositions reviewed;
- twenty-seven prehearing conferences held;
- eighteen disciplinary hearings held;
- eight reinstatement hearings held; and
- twenty hearing committee reports filed.

All prehearing conferences and oral arguments before a Hearing Committee Member or Panel were conducted virtually via Webex. In April 2023, the Board transitioned to in-person hearings for all participants in disciplinary and reinstatement hearings.

Statistics on disciplinary matters included:

- thirty-two Petitions for Discipline filed;
- twenty-seven Joint Petitions for Discipline on Consent filed, twenty-one resulting in discipline imposed;
- three Petitions for Emergency Temporary Suspension and two Contempt petitions filed, all granted;
- five Petitions for Reinstatement from Discipline filed with one granted;
- six Certifications for Reinstatement from Suspension of One Year or Less filed with five granted;
- sixty-seven Petitions for Reinstatement from Inactive Status, Retired Status, or Administrative Suspension of More Than Three Years filed with eighty-two granted and one denied.

*Note: These numbers do not necessarily add up because sometimes matters filed in earlier years are resolved or actions filed in 2023 are not decided by the end of the year.*

Disciplinary actions included:

- twenty-four disbarments;
- thirty-eight suspensions;
- sixteen temporary suspensions;
- three disciplinary transfers to inactive status;
- two probation modifications;
- twelve public reprimands;
- twelve private reprimands;
- thirty-five informal admonitions; and
- 328 administrative suspensions for failure to pay registration fees.

Twenty attorneys applied for waiver of the registration fee due to financial hardship, and eighteen applications were granted.

The Board provided information on the number of attorneys registered in Pennsylvania.

- In total, 74,129 individuals are admitted to practice in Pennsylvania.
- Exactly 47,546 of these are active and located in Pennsylvania; 16,809 are active out of state; 1,847 are inactive in Pennsylvania; and 8,271 are inactive out of state.
- Of those who specified, 60.5% of these are male, and 39.5% female. A small fraction did not specify.
- Of those whose age was known, 2.8% are in their twenties; 19.2% in their thirties; 23% in their forties; 22.9% in their fifties; 20.6% in their sixties; 9.9% in their seventies; and 1.6% are eighty or older.
- Of those who specified, 80.6% of are White or Caucasian, 4.7% are Black or African American, 2.7% are Asian, 1.9% are Hispanic or Latino, and 0.4%. The remainder of registrants did not specify race. Note that attorneys are provided the option to identify more than one race and/or ethnicity.

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## **New Members Appointed to the Disciplinary Board**

Gaetan J. Alfano of Philadelphia, Bryan Scott Neft of Pittsburgh, Catherine R. O'Donnell of Luzerne County, and Joshua F. Wilson of York County have been appointed members of the Pennsylvania Disciplinary Board by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

### ***Gaetan J. Alfano, Esq.***

Mr. Alfano is a partner of the law firm Pietragallo Gordon Alfano Bosick & Raspanti, LLP in Philadelphia, PA and is a member of the Employment and Labor Practice Group.

He has tried hundreds of cases to verdict and has substantial trial and appellate experience. Throughout his more than forty years practicing law, he has represented clients in commercial and employment disputes, insurance insolvency, and receivership matters.

Prior to entering private practice, Alfano served as a Philadelphia assistant district attorney during which time he tried cases on a near-daily basis.

In addition, he has served as vice chair for the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, member of the Board of Law Examiners of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and senior hearing committee member for the Disciplinary Board. Mr. Alfano also served as chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association in 2016 and has held various positions with Philadelphia area non-profits.

He is a graduate of Villanova University and earned his law degree from Villanova School of Law.

His appointment is effective April 1, 2024 for a term of five years.

### ***Brian Scott Neft, Esq.***

Mr. Neft is a member of the law firm Spilman Thomas & Battle PLLC in Pittsburgh, and his primary areas of practice include commercial litigation, health care, and product liability.

He has substantial trial and appellate experience in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and California. Throughout his more than thirty years practicing law, he has represented clients in commercial and employment disputes, insurance law and bad faith, health care, land use, antitrust, and product liability.

Prior to joining Spilman Thomas & Battle PLLC, Mr. Neft began his career as law clerk for the Pennsylvania Superior Court where he learned the essentials of judicial review. In addition, he also practiced with several law firms including Pietragallo Gordon Alfano Bosick & Raspanti and Klett Rooney Lieber & Schorling.

Mr. Neft has sought to improve the profession of law through his leadership in the Allegheny County Bar Association in which he previously served as president. He also maintains memberships with the Pennsylvania Bar Association and American Bar Association and serves on their respective House of Delegates. He also served as a member of and chaired the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania's Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts Board. He is currently president-elect of the Allegheny County Bar Foundation.

His appointment is effective April 1, 2024 for a term of five years.

***Catherine R. O'Donnell, Esq.***

Ms. O'Donnell is a longtime practicing lawyer in Pennsylvania and leads the O'Donnell law firm team in the areas of estate planning, estate administration, Orphans' Court, and elder law.

Ms. O'Donnell also serves as the firm's business manager.

Prior to joining O'Donnell Law Offices, she practiced with Drinker, Biddle & Reath LLP in Philadelphia and was a shareholder of Elliott, Reihner Siedzikowski & Egan PC. O'Donnell also served as a magisterial district judge from 2000 to 2002 and as solicitor for the Wilkes-Barre Redevelopment Authority.

Active in community service, Ms. O'Donnell has served on several boards throughout her career, including current positions as the chair of the Luzerne County Community College Board and the Luzerne County Bar Charitable Foundation Board. She is the assistant secretary of the Friedman Jewish Community Center Board and serves as a board member of the North Branch Land Trust, Junior Leadership Northeast, and Luzerne County Dress for Success.

Ms. O'Donnell completed her undergraduate degree, Juris Doctorate, and Master of Business Administration at the University of Pittsburgh, graduating cum laude with each degree.

Her appointment is effective April 1, 2024 for a term of six years.

***Joshua F. Wilson***

Mr. Wilson will fill one of two non-lawyer positions on the Disciplinary Board.

Mr. Wilson currently serves as a deputy treasurer with the Pennsylvania Treasury Department. He brings extensive judicial experience to the Board after advising the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts for seven years as the director of Intergovernmental Affairs.

With more than twenty-five years of experience in government service and advocacy work, Mr. Wilson's experience extends beyond the judiciary to the executive and legislative branches having served as an assistant to the former Senate Majority Whip and the chief of staff for Lt. Governor Jim Cawley. He has also served on several local government boards and commissions.

Mr. Wilson is a graduate of Millersville University with a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education.

His appointment is effective April 1, 2024 for a term of six years.



*Left to right: Gaetan J. Alfano, Bryan Scott Neft, Catherine R. O'Donnell, and Joshua F. Wilson*

## *Upcoming Public Proceedings*

We encourage you to observe our public disciplinary and reinstatement hearings, oral arguments, and public reprimands on the [Board's YouTube channel](#). You can also view "Upcoming Public Proceedings" at the bottom of the Board's [home page](#).

***Scheduled proceedings begin at 9:30 am unless otherwise noted.***

<i><b>March</b></i>		
March 19 <b>at 10:00 am</b>	Joseph D. Lento Gary Scott Silver	Oral Arguments
<i><b>April</b></i>		
April 2	James A. Katz, Jr.	Disciplinary Hearing
April 10	Arkady Rayz Michael John Pisanchyn, Jr.	Oral Arguments
April 22 April 23	John Patrick Sanderson, III & Scott Richard Sanderson	Consolidated Disciplinary Hearing
<i><b>May</b></i>		
May 1 May 2 May 3	Richard Joseph Silverberg	Disciplinary Hearing
May 8 May 9	Kimberly Ann Furmanek	Disciplinary Hearing
May 15 May 16	Andrew Scott Ziegler	Disciplinary Hearing
May 21 May 22	Maqsood Hamid Mir	Reinstatement Hearing
May 30	Tancredi William Calabrese	Disciplinary Hearing
<i><b>June</b></i>		
June 5 June 6 June 7	Scott Eric Diamond	Disciplinary Hearing
June 20	Stephen William Dotts	Disciplinary Hearing
June 25 June 26 June 27	J. Conor Corcoran	Disciplinary Hearing
<i><b>July</b></i>		
July 29 July 30 July 31	Patrick C. Carey	Disciplinary Hearing
<i><b>September</b></i>		
September 16 September 18	Daryl Alan Yount	Disciplinary Hearing
<i><b>To Be Scheduled</b></i>		
Jonathan C. Dunsmoor - Public Reprimand		
Brian Christopher Eves - Public Reprimand		
Richard P. Kimmins - Public Reprimand		
Timothy Kolman - Public Reprimand		
Ivan Erik Lee - Public Reprimand		
David E. Mulock - Public Reprimand		



# Articles of Interest

## Lawyer Suspended Over Cat Food Case

A Montgomery County lawyer was suspended for a year and a day for misconduct in several cases, including one in which he sued a cat food manufacturer over the death of a cat.

[Michael Eric Adler](#) of Holland, Montgomery County came before the Disciplinary Board based on five complaints. One was filed by counsel for a food company, based on a case he pursued seeking damages for the death of a client's cat, which they suspected was caused by cat food produced by the company. He sent a letter to the company alleging that the food contained dangerous levels of chlorine, citing a Food and Drug Administration recall of a small lot of the product. Counsel for the company explained to him that the food contained choline chloride, a salt common and beneficial in cat food, not chlorine. In spite of this, Adler continued to allege the product contained chlorine and began copying the company's general counsel on the matter.

Subsequently, he sent an email letter to the company's executives and board members without prior notice or approval from counsel. He then posted statements on multiple social media sites, spreading concerns of "chlorine in cat food" and describing the FDA recall as a coverup when it was a voluntary recall of a single lot of the product, and accusing counsel for the company of misconduct.

The Disciplinary Board found that his continued insistence that the cat food contained chlorine, after being educated by opposing counsel about the chemistry, violated [Rule 4.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct](#), which prohibits a lawyer to knowingly make a false statement of material fact or law to a third person in the course of representing a client, and [Rule 8.4\(c\)](#), conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation. They also found that his direct communication with the executives and board of the company violated [Rule 4.2](#) which forbids a lawyer to contact a represented party about the subject of the representation without the consent of their counsel.

The other four complaints resulted in findings that Adler had violated numerous Rules of Professional Conduct relating to diligence, communication, consultation, competence truthfulness, and withdrawal. The Disciplinary Board found aggravating factors in prior discipline in the form of a private reprimand for similar misconduct. Adler asserted that he had made restitution to his client by reimbursing the Lawyer's Fund for Client Security for a claim paid out to the client, but the Board rejected this argument, noting that reimbursing the Client Security Fund for an award is not the same as voluntarily repaying the client.

After reviewing comparable cases, the Board departed from the Hearing Committee's recommendation of a two-year suspension and determined that suspension for one year and one day, which will require Adler to apply for reinstatement, was appropriate. The Supreme Court agreed and suspended Adler for one year and one day.

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## Lawyer Running Naked at Concert Leads to Discipline – But Not His

This is a story about Phishing – but not the kind of phishing these stories are usually about.

A Colorado lawyer has been disciplined arising out of an incident of another Colorado lawyer being naked and disorderly at a concert of the blues-rock band Phish. Ironically, the discipline was

directed not to the naturist but to another lawyer who represented a client aggrieved by his antics.

[Sarah Schielke](#) of Loveland, Colorado agreed to a public censure by the Colorado Supreme Court for her treatment of another attorney who admitted to running naked at a Phish concert in Mexico. She represented a personal friend who alleged that the lawyer “while naked, shoved the client and other crowd members when he attempted to rush the stage”. She alleged that the client suffered physical injuries from the incident as well as embarrassment from the lawyer’s subsequent social media posts.

A stipulation provides that Schielke sent a demand letter to the lawyer, seeking \$50,000 in damages and an agreement not to touch or contact her client and to stay twenty-five feet away from her at any future Phish events. In return, she stated that the client would refrain from suing the lawyer, contacting his employers, or notifying the lawyer’s undergraduate university, potentially barring him from participating in future alumni events. If he refused, Schielke threatened to issue a press release with an unredacted video allegedly showing the lawyer engaging with security at the concert, bring claims against the lawyer in federal district court and in Mexico, and report the lawyer’s conduct to the police where the incident took place.

In the Stipulation, the parties agreed that Schielke’s letter violated [Colorado RPC 4.4\(a\)](#) (in representing a client, using means that have no substantial purpose other than to embarrass, delay, or burden a third person) and [Colo. RPC 4.5\(a\)](#) (threatening criminal, administrative, or disciplinary charges to obtain an advantage in a civil matter).

In a [statement to CBS News](#), Schielke reiterated her criticisms of the lawyer’s conduct, and said, “Here, a naked lawyer hurt my best friend, and my passion for righteousness clearly went too far.”

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### **Young Lawyers Cautioned Against Giving Legal Advice to Friends and Family**

In an [article](#) published in the *ABA Journal*, several experienced attorneys caution young lawyers about the risk of giving legal advice to friends and family.

Lynda C. Shely, the immediate past chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility, warns young lawyers that giving people in close personal relationships even a little legal advice forms an attorney-client relationship, which can lead to malpractice or disciplinary consequences if the advice proves to be wrong. She notes that even if giving casual advice in informal circumstances, the lawyer would probably have to put that contact in their firm’s database as a potential client and a potential conflict under Model Rule 1.18.

Khasim Lockhart, an associate at Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz in New York, whose practice includes legal ethics and professional responsibility, notes that young lawyers may be tempted to “flex the knowledge” they gained in law school and limited practice experience to appear knowledgeable and useful.

Bruce A. Green, who directs the Louis Stein Center for Law and Ethics at the Fordham University School of Law and serves as the current chair of the ABA’s Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility, cautions against giving advice beyond referral to competent counsel, especially in areas outside the lawyer’s experience and expertise.

Lockhart advises that young lawyers should respond to inquiries outside their expertise with an offer to assist the inquiring party in finding appropriate counsel which the lawyer may be better equipped to do than the person seeking counsel. Shely recommends that if the lawyer does feel competent to give advice, she or he should still insist on the recipient coming into the office or

doing a virtual consultation followed by an engagement letter and compliance with the firm's client relationship requirements. Otherwise, she notes, the person receiving the advice may assume the lawyer is handling the matter for them when the lawyer does not intend to do so.

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### **To Bot or Not to Bot: Is There a Duty to Use AI?**

In this newsletter, we have [often posted stories](#) of lawyers who came to grief through the uncritical use of artificial intelligence software such as ChatGPT and its law-oriented offspring. But a [discussion](#) at the ABA's Techshow 2024 raises an interesting question.

*Do lawyers and law firms have a duty to use AI tools to conduct cost-effective research that saves clients fees?*

Pablo Arredondo, a co-founder of [Casetext](#), noted that the judicious use of AI tech tools can save vast amounts of time on research. He questioned whether it is ethical to charge clients tens of thousands of dollars for research performed by associates when a tech tool can search millions of documents for terms in hours or days that would take weeks or months of human research to accomplish. He pointed to a [2023 study](#) by [economists at Goldman Sachs](#), finding that up to forty-four percent of legal tasks now performed by lawyers and legal personnel could be automated in the coming years. "We have a zealous duty to our clients, and our duty to them means that we should," he said.

The panelists noted the risk of unquestioning reliance on automated research. There is no doubt that lawyers must review and confirm all citations and authorities generated by such tools. Arredondo compared the unexamined use of AI research to relying on someone who is extremely well read but is also a sociopath.

Daniel W. Linna, Jr., a senior lecturer at the Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, agreed. He urged that lawyers and law firms view such resources as tools to solve specific problems and provide value but not as a substitute for legal diligence.

Arredondo asked for a show of hands as to whether conference attendees viewed these tools as cause for fear or rejoicing. Most responded that they see the tools as cause for rejoice. For better or worse, it appears the bots are coming, and developing the skills to manage them and use them effectively is likely to be a major mission for the legal profession in the coming years.

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### **A New Frontier in Evidence: Emojis and Emoticons**

Is your emoji/emoticon intelligence up to snuff? Someday you may be called on to use them as evidence.

For those still practicing law with typewriters and Liquid Paper, an emoji is a small digital image or icon, and an emoticon is a representation of a facial expression formed by various combinations of keyboard characters and used to convey the writer's feelings or intended tone. The grandfather of all emojis is the famous "smiley face" formed by typing :, -, and ) which comes out as :-). (Do this in Word and most modern applications, and the software will generate the appropriate image for you. Go ahead, try it.) Emojis have since expanded to a vast variety of forms, some of which express sentiments considerably darker than smiley faces.

Like anything that gives vent to emotions, emojis have begun to creep into legal practice. In 2015,

a Delaware judge [found](#) that the use of a “winky” emoticon was part of a pattern of harassment suggesting a malicious intent. In 2017, a Massachusetts court [ruled](#) that a defendant’s use of an emoticon with Xs for eyes, attached to the victim’s name, was evidence that a shooting was premeditated rather than an accident. In 2019, an [Ohio court](#) viewed the defendant’s act of sending a “wave” emoji to the victim via Facebook Messenger as a violation of a no-contact provision of a protective order. Far from being trivial, the use of these devices can have legal consequences.

The issue is viewed seriously enough that a session entitled ["Cutting-Edge Electronic Evidence: Explore Emojiland – How Will You Decode Tomorrow's Evidence?"](#) was presented at the [ABA's Techshow 2024](#). Patrick Wright, managing partner of the Wright Firm in Texas, pointed out that emojis may very well be admissible evidence if they have probative value. He encouraged attorneys to learn the meanings of emojis and emoticons occurring in their cases. He warned that emojis may have hidden meanings especially when combined. He pointed out an example that an emoji of a snowflake or a person skiing could be a reference to cocaine. “Emojis, especially when they are strung together, can have different intent and meanings,” he said, “and it’s important to [understand] that.”

## *Attorney Well-Being*

### **March Is Problem Gambling Awareness Month**

This month, we bring awareness to **Gambling Disorder**, a recognized mental health disorder. [Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania](#) (LCL) offers confidential assistance and other [online resources](#) to legal professionals who may be struggling with problem gambling.

Visit LCL's website for access to ["Overcoming the 'Secret' Addiction: Gambling in the Legal Profession"](#), a **free CLE session** presented by LCL Education and Outreach Coordinator Brian S. Quinn.

*If you or someone you know is struggling with a gambling problem, please call LCL's confidential helpline at (888) 999-1941. LCL staff will offer hope and help without stigma or shame. Do not struggle in silence.*

# PROBLEM GAMBLING FACT SHEET



Whether you're seeking information for yourself or a loved one, this fact sheet can help you gain a better understanding of what problem gambling is, its impact, and how to find support.

## What is Problem Gambling?

Problem gambling (sometimes referred to as "gambling addiction" or "gambling disorder") is gambling behavior that is damaging to a person or their family, often disrupting their daily life and career. Anyone who gambles can be at-risk for developing a gambling problem. Gambling disorder is a recognized mental health diagnosis.

### Some warning signs of a gambling problem are:

- Thinking about gambling all the time.
- Feeling the need to bet more money and more often.
- Going back to try to win your money back ("chasing losses").
- Feeling restless or irritable when trying to stop or cut down.
- Gambling despite negative consequences.
- In extreme cases, problem gambling can cause bankruptcy, legal problems, job loss, family harms, and thinking about suicide.

## How Widespread is Problem Gambling in the U.S.?

- An estimated 2.5 million US adults (1%) meet the criteria for severe gambling problems in a given year.
- Another 5-8 million (2-3%) meet one or more of the criteria for gambling disorder and are experiencing problems due to their gambling behavior.

*The National Council on Problem Gambling estimates that the annual national social cost of problem gambling is **\$14 billion**. These costs include job loss, bankruptcy, gambling-related healthcare spending and other consequences.*

## Problem Gambling Support & Resources

The National Problem Gambling Helpline (**1-800-GAMBLER**) is available via call, text or chat and can provide detailed information regarding treatment resources available in your area.

**Call: 1-800-GAMBLER • Text: 800GAM • Chat: [www.1800gamblerchat.org](http://www.1800gamblerchat.org)**

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### Well-Being in Law Week Returns in May

The Institute for Well-Being in Law's annual [Well-Being Week in Law](#) returns May 6-10, 2024, aligning with Mental Health Awareness Month. The goal of the celebration is to "raise awareness about mental health and encourage action and innovation across the profession to improve well-being". Any individual, law firm, corporate legal department, government entity, bar association, law school, or other legal organization is invited to participate. *More information is soon to come.*



# WELL-BEING WEEK IN LAW

## MAY 6-10, 2024

### Explore the Disciplinary Board's Lawyer Well-Being Webpage

The Disciplinary Board's "[Lawyer Well-Being](https://padisciplinaryboard.org/for-attorneys/well-being)" webpage connects Pennsylvania attorneys with pertinent resources, [articles](#), events, and CLE opportunities to better understand and support their mental health and well-being. To access the Board's new "Lawyer Well-Being" page, visit [padisciplinaryboard.org/for-attorneys/well-being](https://padisciplinaryboard.org/for-attorneys/well-being).

## LAWYER WELL-BEING

Connect to available resources to better understand and support mental health and well-being, particularly as they relate to the legal profession.

[padisciplinaryboard.org/for-attorneys/well-being](https://padisciplinaryboard.org/for-attorneys/well-being)



The DISCIPLINARY BOARD  
of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania



The screenshot shows the Disciplinary Board's Lawyer Well-Being webpage. The page has a navigation menu with links for Rules, Firms, Attorney Registration, Reinstatement, Pro Bono, Attorney Gateway, Update My Information, Successorship, Lawyer Well-Being, and FAQs & Resources. The main content area includes a section for 'Lawyer Well-Being' with a video thumbnail and a section for 'MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING WITHIN THE LEGAL PROFESSION' with a list of resources. The page also includes a 'Digital resources' sidebar with links to 'Informative articles', 'Upcoming events', and 'CLE opportunities'.



Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers is a confidential and safe resource for Pennsylvania attorneys and their family members who may be struggling with their mental health or substance use. Since 1988, LCL has confidentially assisted and supported thousands of individuals who have faced a myriad of challenges (including grief, stress, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, gambling problems, problematic alcohol or prescription drug use, etc.), helping them navigate through dark and difficult times. If you or someone you know is struggling, please call us. You may save a life.



**There is help, and there is hope.**



LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR LAWYERS  
PENNSYLVANIA

**lclpa.org | 1-888-999-1941**

Evaluation by a  
healthcare professional  
Information and literature  
Peer and staff support  
Assistance with interventions  
Recovery meetings  
Online resources and CLE

*Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers is a confidential assistance program for the Pennsylvania legal community and their family members. LCL may not report information about a subject attorney back to the Disciplinary Board.*

### **Confidential 24/7 Helpline: 1-888-999-1941**

Last year, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania adopted amendments to the Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement (Pa.R.D.E.) relating to confidentiality of proceedings, providing for three exceptions to the requirement of confidentiality under [Pa.R.D.E. 402\(d\)](#). Included in these exceptions is the allowance for Disciplinary Counsel to make a referral of an attorney to [Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania](#) (LCL) and share information as part of the referral. However, it is crucial to note that LCL may *not* report information about a subject attorney back to the Disciplinary Board. LCL is a **confidential** assistance program for the Pennsylvania legal community and their family members.

## *Around the Court*



### **March Is Women's History Month**

Since 1987, the United States has recognized March as [Women's History Month](#) in conjunction with International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8th.

Throughout this month, the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts has highlighted current women judges across the Commonwealth on its social media pages. The Unified Judicial System also recently [released](#) a new infographic featuring women on the bench in PA.

While thirty-nine percent of the state's active judges are women, they comprise the majority of

Superior and Commonwealth Court judges. There are three women currently serving on the Supreme Court, including Chief Justice Debra Todd, the first woman in the Court's history to hold the position of chief justice.

The graphic also notes trailblazers of the PA Courts, including Hon. Juanita Kidd Stout, the first elected Black woman to serve on any state supreme court, and Hon. Anne X. Aplern, the first woman to serve on the PA Supreme Court.

Read the full press release [here](#).

## Women on the Bench in Pennsylvania

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*From the Pennsylvania Bar Association*





### **Educating Youth about Courts, Laws, and the Legal Profession**

Lawyers and judges across Pennsylvania contribute countless hours of their time to help educate young people in kindergarten through high school so that they better understand their rights and responsibilities, the role of laws in our country, how our judicial system functions, and the importance of jury service and voting.

While there are many ways to contribute, one of the most significant educational efforts for students is the Pennsylvania Bar Association Young Lawyer Division [Mock Trial Competition](#). PA's High School Mock Trial program is one of the largest in the nation with over 290 high school student teams from across the state acting as lawyers and witnesses in simulated civil trials. Students spend weeks preparing and learning about a case and rules of evidence, honing their opening and closing statements, learning to ask questions of witnesses, and developing trial skills that translate into important life skills.

Lawyers and judges volunteer their time to assist students as team advisors, scorekeepers, and regional coordinators. Additional lawyers and judges also are needed to serve as judges and scoring jurors in the trials at the local levels, advancing to district and regional competitions.

All PA competition culminates with the state finals to be held March 22-23, 2024 in Harrisburg. The winning state champion team then advances to the National Mock Trial in May.

We invite you to learn more about the [high school mock trial program](#) and to consider helping next year. It is a rewarding experience that helps to increase education about legal and judicial systems, to teach critical thinking and civility, and perhaps to inspire future careers in the law.

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*Please note that the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) are separate organizations. For more information about PBA, visit their [website](#).*

## *We Want To Hear From You...*

We are always on the lookout for stories of interest relating to legal ethics, new issues in the practice of law, lawyer wellness, and funny or just plain weird stories about the legal profession. If you come across something you think might be enlightening, educational, or entertaining to our readers or social media followers, [pass it along](#). If you are our original source, there may be a hat tip in it for you.

## *Resources*

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