



The
DISCIPLINARY BOARD
of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

**November
2022
Newsletter**



Facebook



Twitter



LinkedIn



YouTube

From the Chair

In her first [open letter](#) to the bar as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, the Honorable Debra Todd stresses the persisting need for pro bono legal services in our commonwealth's communities. Chief Justice Todd implores involvement in local *pro bono* work and touts the efforts of [PA Free Legal Answers](#). This project, expertly facilitated by the Pennsylvania Bar Association, provides free basic legal advice to web users without expectation of extended representation. It is an easy and convenient – yet highly-impactful – way for lawyers and law students to serve their fellow Pennsylvanians. The Disciplinary Board encourages all PA lawyers to proudly honor their professional charge to “render public interest legal service” under [Rule 6.1](#).



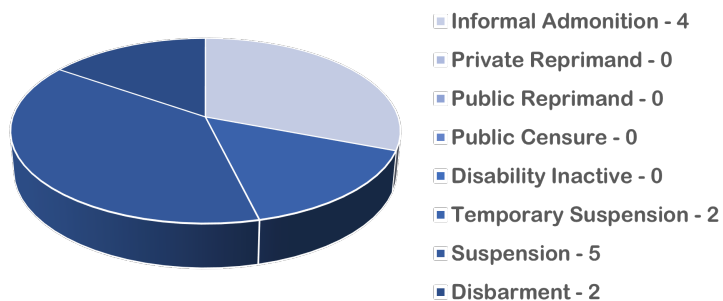
Last month, the Board held its annual training for new volunteer Hearing Committee Members. Hearing Committee Members play a crucial role in our attorney disciplinary system, assessing Disciplinary Counsel's recommendations for discipline and conducting hearings on formal charges of professional misconduct and petitions for reinstatement. Comprehensive training is essential to Members' prudent undertakings. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all who attended and all who helped to make this year's event a success. If you would like to serve the profession as a Hearing Committee Member, be on the lookout for our application in early 2023!

Stay well,

Jerry M. Lehocky
Board Chair

Discipline Imposed

October 2022



Temporary Suspension

[Scott Eric Diamond](#)
[Charles W. Johnston](#)

Suspension

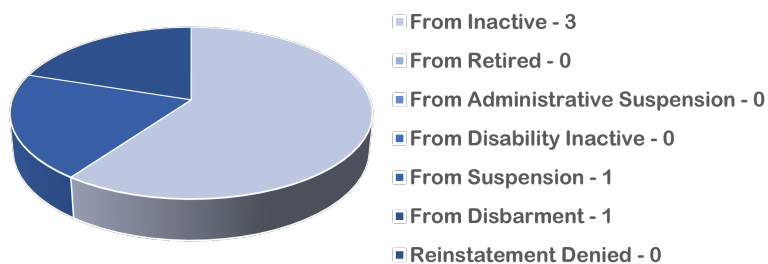
[Barry Jay Beran](#)
[Edward Harrington Heyburn](#)
[Lon VanDusen Hughes](#)
[Christopher M. Manganello](#)
[Charles C. Shainberg](#)

Disbarment

[Erik Benjamin Cherdak](#)
[Harriet A. Gilliam](#)

Reinstatements

October 2022



From Inactive

[Adam Scott Beck](#)
[Scott Andrew Coffina](#)
[Denise Helen Georges](#)

From Suspension

[Angela E.M. Montgomery-Budd](#)

From Disbarment

[Joshua Lawrence Gayl](#)

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

What Is Emeritus Status?

Did you know? There are currently thirty-five retired Pennsylvania attorneys on “emeritus status”.

Emeritus status, first [established](#) by Supreme Court Order in 2018, allows retired attorneys to lend their expertise to the provision of pro bono legal services in PA. Through their work with legal aid and other nonprofit programs, emeritus attorneys fulfill an invaluable role in communities across the Commonwealth by helping to lessen the gap between the need for and the availability of free legal services.

Visit the Disciplinary Board’s website to learn more about the [emeritus status](#) program.

Rules

Disciplinary Board Proposes Undercover Investigations Comment

The Disciplinary Board has [published](#) a proposed rulemaking at [52 Pa.B. 6357](#) (10/8/22) which would add a new comment to [Rule 8.4](#), Misconduct. The proposed rule would clarify that a lawyer does not violate the prohibition of RPC 8.4(c) on conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation by participating in a matter which involves undercover investigators “pretexting”, or using assumed identities for purposes of the investigation.

The new proposed Comment 2 states:

“Notwithstanding the general restriction against engaging in deceit, this Rule does not prohibit a lawyer from advising or supervising another who engages in an otherwise lawful and ethical undercover investigation, in which the investigator does not disclose his or her true identity and motivation, regardless of the nature of the matter or substantive area of law involved.”

In its explanatory note, the Board observes that the United States Supreme Court has recognized that deception and pretext are permissible tools of lawful investigations. *Lewis v. United States*, [385 U.S. 206](#), 209 (1966) (recognizing the propriety of concealing and misleading agents' identities in investigations); *Havens Realty Corp. v. Coleman*, [455 U.S. 363](#), 373 (1982) (approving deception and pretext in determining housing discrimination). Examples of contexts where pretexting is often used include employing “testers” who misrepresent their identity or purpose (or both) to apply for housing or job openings to uncover discriminatory practices or directing investigators to pose as business customers to identify potential trademark infringement activity taking place in the daily operations of a target company.

The Board notes that approximately twenty states have adopted amendments to their Rules of Professional Conduct to authorize and define deception in pursuit of lawful undercover activities. Such allowances are often limited to particular classes of lawyers pursuing the public good. The majority of these jurisdictions still forbid the lawyer to participate personally in the pretexting and only allow their participation in efforts where nonlawyer investigators perform the acts that constitute pretexting.

The Comment goes on to add:

“This Rule does not change the scope of a lawyer's obligations under Rule 4.2 and thus a lawyer must take reasonable measures so that the investigator does not communicate with a represented party in violation of Rule 4.2, does not seek to elicit privileged information, and otherwise acts in compliance with these Rules, court orders, and civil and criminal law.”

This part of the Comment imposes a duty on the lawyer to draw boundaries for the persons engaging in pretexting, to assure they understand the kinds of information they can elicit without putting the lawyer in a position of violating other Rules of Professional Conduct.

Interested persons are invited to submit **written** comments, suggestions, or objections **on or before December 7, 2022** by mail, email, or fax to the Executive Office of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

The Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 5600
PO Box 62625
Harrisburg, PA 17106-2625
Fax: (717) 231-3381
Email: DBoard.Comments@pacourts.us

CLE Board Proposes New Rule with Sexual Harassment/Diversity Mandate

The Continuing Legal Education Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has [published](#) a proposed set of amendments to [Rule 105](#) of the Pennsylvania Rules for Continuing Legal Education ("Pa.R.C.L.E.") and [Section 3](#) of the Regulations for Continuing Legal Education.

The proposed amendment would consolidate subsections 105(a)(2)(ii) through (iv) into one subsection (ii), Ethics and Professionalism. The minimum annual CLE requirement will remain at twelve hours.

The amendment to Section 3 of the CLE Regulations states that “Ethics and Professionalism” is defined to include:

- lawyer ethics and the rules of professional conduct;
- lawyer professionalism;
- substance abuse as it affects lawyers and the practice of law;
- diversity, inclusion, and anti-bias training related to lawyers and the practice of law;
- sexual harassment awareness and prevention training related to lawyers and the practice of law; and
- such other subjects as may be designated in the future by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

The Ethics and Professionalism requirement would be expanded to two hours with ten hours of substantive law, practice, and procedure.

The amendment to Section 3 of the Regulations further provides that the CLE requirement for ethics and professionalism shall include a minimum of one (1) hour in subjects relating to diversity, inclusion, and anti-bias training and a minimum of (1) hour in subjects relating to sexual harassment awareness and prevention training. These are to be completed by the lawyer's

second full compliance period following adoption of the amendment. This is a one-time requirement that terminates as to each lawyer upon completion of such coursework. Lawyers may, but are not required to, take additional coursework in these subjects to fulfill their annual CLE ethics and professionalism requirement.

Interested persons are invited to submit **written** comments to the proposed amendments by mail or email **on or before January 5, 2023**.

The Continuing Legal Education Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3400
PO Box 62495
Harrisburg, PA 17106-2495
Email: kbuggy@pacle.org

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>November</i>		
November 29	Matthew J. Reusing, Jr.	Reinstatement Hearing
November 30	Michael Eric Adler	Disciplinary Hearing
<i>December</i>		
December 1	Michael Eric Adler	Disciplinary Hearing
December 7 at 10:00 am	Demetrius William Fannick Marc Alan Roberts James J. Ruggiero, Jr. Steven Ronald Savoia Timothy Nicholas Tomasic	Public Reprimand
December 9 at 1:00 pm	George W. Bills, Jr. Richard E. Bower William R. Korey Laurence Anthony Narcisi, III Anthony Hugh Rodriques	Public Reprimand
December 13 December 14	Craig B. Sokolow	Reinstatement Hearing
<i>January</i>		
January 5 January 10	Gary Scott Silver	Disciplinary Hearing
January 11 January 12	Anthony C. Cappuccio	Reinstatement Hearing
January 23 January 24 January 25	Joseph D. Lento	Disciplinary Hearing
January 31	Lawrence E. Bolind, Jr.	Disciplinary Hearing
<i>February</i>		
February 2	Gordon D. Fisher	Disciplinary Hearing
February 3 February 15	George Paul Chada	Disciplinary Hearing
February 21	Ashley Drue Martin	Disciplinary Hearing
<i>March</i>		
March 6 March 7 March 8	Patrick C. Carey	Disciplinary Hearing
March 21	Gina Yvonne Toppin	Disciplinary Hearing
<i>April</i>		
April 4	John T. Lynch, Jr.	Reinstatement Hearing

Articles of Interest

Pennsylvania Lawyer Sanctioned for Copying Motion

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania imposed an [order of sanctions](#) on a Montgomery County attorney based on a finding that she filed a motion which was copied word-for-word from a motion filed by opposing counsel.

Attorney Christine E. Munion represented the Borough of West Chester in a challenge to its open burning ordinance filed by two activists based on a flag-burning protest.

The evening before a court-imposed deadline for filing motions in limine, counsel for the protestors filed a motion seeking to exclude the opinion testimony of a police officer on the grounds he had not been disclosed as a witness and lacked the necessary expertise to provide opinion testimony. The following day, Munion filed a similar motion seeking to exclude opinion testimony from the plaintiffs on the same grounds. In fact, the court found that whole paragraphs of the motion were lifted word-for-word from the plaintiffs' motion, including typographical errors carried over from the original.

Judge Gene Pratter found that the wholesale copying of the plaintiffs' motion violated [Rule 3.3](#) of the Rules of Professional Conduct, which requires candor to the tribunal, and also [Rule 1.1](#), which mandates competent representation of a client. Judge Pratter determined that an award of attorney fees to plaintiffs' counsel was an appropriate sanction; however, she also found that the number of hours claimed for the drafting of the motion for sanctions was excessive for a clear-cut case and pared the award back to an adjusted award of \$8,483.55 for fees and costs.

Blogger Eugene Volokh [discussed](#) the case and noted, "Plagiarism in lawyering is judged by different standards from plagiarism in academic life. For instance, when a lawyer copies material from a law firm colleague's old motion, and properly adapts it for the new motion, that's considered wise use of time and the client's money, not plagiarism." However, he also notes that massive copying from the other side's work product without properly adapting the language to fit the client and the facts is likely to land the lawyer in trouble with the courts.

Eight Financial Mistakes that Get Lawyers into Ethical Trouble

The American Bar Association's *Law Practice Today* [published](#) a useful summary of financial mistakes that can get lawyers into serious ethical trouble. The list was compiled by Canadian attorney David J. Bilinsky, the principal of Thoughtful Legal Management, a practice management consulting firm.

Bilinsky counts down the most serious mistakes:

8. Financial abuse of vulnerable or incapacitated clients: A lawyer acting as a fiduciary for an elderly or disabled client may have access to large amounts of money with relatively little supervision or accountability. Dipping into those funds is deplorable on a moral basis, and also a pathway to serious discipline.

7. Commingling client funds: [RPC 1.15\(b\)](#) mandates a strict separation of client funds from the lawyer's own resources. Particularly where the lawyer begins to think of client funds as partially their own (such as for legal fees), commingling often leads to ethical violations due to carelessness.

6. Failing to have a proper trust and general accounting system and using it properly: Bilinsky notes that double-entry bookkeeping is the expected standard for accurate accounting of funds. Some lawyers use spreadsheets which were not designed for the purpose and which do not provide the protection that a well-designed double-entry system does.

5. Failing to properly run your trust account, do monthly reconciliations and investigate potential problems promptly: [RPC 1.15\(a\) and \(g\) through \(o\)](#) contain detailed requirements for establishing and using trust accounts. Every lawyer who handles client funds is expected to know and abide by these requirements.

4. Paying others for recommending the lawyer's services or for channeling professional work: [RPC 5.4](#) prohibits sharing fees with nonlawyers. Paying a referral fee to a lawyer is acceptable under some circumstances, but referral fees to nonlawyers are fraught with ethical issues. Recent years have seen the rise of online service providers who offer limited-scope legal services to be provided by a local attorney within set rates with the payment of a fee to the online company. Bilinsky details several ethical issues with such an approach.

3. Inflating your billable hours or overcharging your client: [RPC 1.5](#) provides for eight factors to be considered in determining the reasonableness of a fee. It should be obvious that claiming fees for time one has not actually spent, double-billing, and billing for activities not reasonably related to the client's needs present serious ethical questions.

2. Failing to render an accurate trust, fees, and expenses reconciliation to a client when required or requested to do so: [RPC 1.15\(d\)](#) requires a lawyer to render prompt notice of receipt of any funds on a client's behalf and a prompt accounting upon request.

1. Dipping into your trust account to meet expenses or any other reason not connected with the client's business: Taking a client's funds for personal use, even on the belief that the lawyer is owed money for legal fees, is one of the most serious ethical offenses a lawyer can commit and has led to many cases of serious discipline including disbarment and, in many cases, criminal charges as well.

Autistic Lawyer Reviews *Extraordinary Attorney Woo*

There is no shortage of lawyer dramas on television, but the South Korean series *Extraordinary Attorney Woo*, based on the professional and personal life of a lawyer on the autism spectrum, stands out. Autistic attorney Woo Young-woo, portrayed by acclaimed actor Park Eun-bin, obtains a job at a prestigious law firm based on her top-ranked grades at law school and the intervention of a senior partner. She encounters a rocky start but soon wins the support of her colleagues by using her extraordinary powers of memory and intellect to pathways to success that her allistic colleagues miss. The series offers drama and comedy as well as an intriguing look into the legal system of another culture.

Autistic attorney Haley Moss, who has [written](#) about the challenges neurodiverse attorneys face, watched and [commented](#) on the series. She found the title character "endearing and relatable". She noted that many of the character's quirks, such as being very routine-driven, always eating the same foods, and wearing noise-canceling headphones whenever in public, are common traits of autistic people which she herself shares. She notes that the show misses opportunities for the title character to engage in more self-advocacy, relying on the kindness and tolerance of those around her. She also regrets that the show fails to address the need for "masking" – the suppression of certain neurodiverse traits in order to fit in with neurotypical people – which she says creates a psychological toll for the autistic person trying not to be her genuine self. She expresses the view that the show presents exaggerations of autistic traits, perhaps because the creators neither consulted with autistic people nor cast autistic actors.

Despite these flaws, she concluded that the series is a step forward in the portrayal of autistic characters in the media and a large one for much of the world where perceptions of neurodivergent people are harsher and less supportive than in the United States.

Attorneys Tackle Fleeing Inmate

Most district attorneys will tell you their job is to help catch criminals, but few take that duty as literally as Oklahoma County District Attorney David Prater.

A&E's Court Cam [caught](#) Prater and a group of attorneys leaping into action when a fleeing suspect shook loose two rounds of deputies and made a break for freedom. Prater saw the situation developing and, after taking the time to unbutton his suitcoat, clamped on to the decamping defendant's arm and hung on long enough for a posse of fellow counsel to swarm and subdue the fleeing felon until the deputies could arrive and reassert their cast-off custody.

Remarkably, this was the fourth time Mr. Prater has been called upon to lasso a fleeing fugitive. Perhaps he could be excused for wearing track shoes to court.

Attorney Well-Being

Vicarious Trauma Within the Legal Profession

"Vicarious trauma" is a term that many within the legal profession may be learning for the first time but have experienced often throughout their career. Termed "compassion fatigue" or "the cost of caring" by some, it can be [characterized](#) as "an occupational challenge for people working and volunteering . . . [with] continuous exposure to victims of trauma and violence." All too common amongst those working in medicine, emergency services, education, and law, this form of [burnout](#) stems from emotionally arduous work experiences and may have a lasting impact on one's personal life and world view.

Trauma almost never solely impacts the individual who directly experiences it. In any occurrence of trauma (direct or vicarious), the pertinent individual or group feels a sense of helplessness or a lack of control over the circumstances at hand. Without proper support or mitigation, trauma may lead to a variety of psychosocial symptoms and alterations to brain chemistry.

In a recent issue of *Bench & Bar of Minnesota*, attorney and assistant professor of law Natalie Netzel [detailed](#) her own struggles with vicarious trauma. Her experiences grew from self-doubt and blame into panic attacks, paranoia, and an overall sense of powerlessness following frequent trauma exposure in her law practice.

While vicarious trauma may manifest uniquely within each individual, there are some common indications which can be used to recognize its influence. *What are some frequent [symptoms](#) of vicarious trauma?*

- Difficulty managing and expressing emotions
- Misplaced frustration or anger
- Disrupted or unproductive sleep
- "Racing" thoughts and increased anxiety or worry about potential dangers

- Panic attacks
- Loss of self-efficacy and perception of control
- Disassociation and decreased concentration
- Decreased satisfaction in activities once enjoyable
- Physical aches and pains and digestive discomfort
- Withdrawal or avoidance of social interactions
- Feelings of pessimism, hopelessness, and unwarranted guilt

What are some [personal strategies](#) to employ to reduce the risk of vicarious trauma?

- Increase self-reflection and observation
- Seek social support from colleagues, friends, and family members
- Meaningfully define and honor the boundaries of your downtime and personal life
- Maintain interests and hobbies outside of work
- Practice [mindfulness](#) techniques or breathwork
- Engage in relaxing self-care activities
- Maintain realistic expectations of yourself
- Prioritize physical activity, healthy eating, and sleep hygiene
- Seek professional assistance when needed

In addition to trauma exposure, workplace [organizational factors](#) may further exacerbate symptoms of vicarious trauma. *What can employers do to [support](#) employees who may be experiencing or may be at risk of such symptoms?*

- Offer flexibility in work schedules and thoughtfully respect the boundaries of employees' downtime and personal lives
- Discuss vicarious trauma in causal one-on-one or small group sessions
- Encourage physical activity, healthy eating, and sleep hygiene routines
- Allow time and space for meditation or other mindful activities
- Support healthy interpersonal relationships amongst employees
- Ensure an appropriate workload, reevaluating regularly
- Intentionally design variety in work tasks
- Refer to professional assistance, including state and local lawyer assistance programs

In her *Bench & Bar* commentary, Netzel urges her fellow lawyers to extend themselves grace in the face of trauma exposure and to seek support without shame or guilt. With growing research on this phenomenon, there are numerous resources and outlets available to those at risk of vicarious trauma in the legal profession. Vulnerability and an openness to help, above all, are signs of strength – not weakness – both in law practice and personal growth.

Netzel asserts, "Ultimately, unexamined vicarious trauma serves no one well – not us and certainly not the people we are hoping to help professionally."

Managing Holiday Stress and Expectations

Laurie Besden, Executive Director of [Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania](#), was recently [interviewed](#) for the American Bar Association's *Asked & Answered* podcast. Besden discusses holiday stress and expectations and how to manage both through honoring boundaries and seeking meaningful personal traditions. Listen to the *Asked & Answered* [episode](#) for the full interview.

Lawyer Mental Health and Well-Being Article Series Available on Disciplinary Board's Website

Throughout this year's Mental Health Awareness Month, the Disciplinary Board partnered with Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers to publish an article series on mental health and well-being in the legal profession. With the expertise of Jennifer C. Zampogna, M.D., Director of Operations at Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers, the series presents several topics on wellness as it relates to both attorney's personal and professional lives and misconduct prevention. Articles address [challenges to mental health](#), [stress and burnout](#), [preventative strategies](#), [employer support](#), and [seeking support through LCL](#). All five articles are [available](#) on the Disciplinary Board's website.



All articles available on the Disciplinary Board's website

Article Series

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING WITHIN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

 LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR LAWYERS
PENNSYLVANIA

If you or someone you know is struggling, call LCL's confidential hotline at 1-888-999-1941.

 The DISCIPLINARY BOARD
of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Confidentiality with Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers

This past March, 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.

LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR LAWYERS
— PENNSYLVANIA —

If you or someone you care about is in distress because of alcohol, drugs, depression, anxiety, stress, gambling, or other mental health issues, LCL can help.

1-888-999-1941

www.lclpa.org



[Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers](#) (LCL) is a confidential and safe resource for Pennsylvania attorneys and their family members who may be struggling with their mental health or substance use. An astounding one in three legal professionals will face these issues at some point in their career. 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. Members of our profession are dying because they are afraid or unable to ask for help. If you or someone you know is struggling, please call us. You may save a life. There is help, and there is hope.

Resource Guide for the Legal Profession During COVID-19

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

Lawyers-only [support meetings](#)

Peer and staff support and resource coordination

Free, voluntary, and confidential LCL resources

Free CLE, resources, and information at lclpa.org

Assessment by a healthcare professional to determine a customized treatment plan if indicated

Around the Court



Chief Justice Todd Authors Letter to Bar Honoring the National Celebration of Pro Bono

Chief Justice Debra Todd has published her first open letter to Pennsylvania attorneys

encouraging support of pro bono legal work across the Commonwealth. She recognizes this year's [National Celebration of Pro Bono](#) which was observed throughout the week of October 23rd-29th. First begot under the sponsorship of the American Bar Association by Pennsylvania lawyer [Sharon Browning](#), the celebration urges the importance of pro bono legal services provided by attorneys helping to advance equal access to justice. This year's theme, "Law in Everyday Life", illuminates ways in which obstacles to legal assistance have further disadvantaged low-income communities and how the need for pro bono services persists.

Chief Justice Todd highlights the work of [PA Free Legal Answers](#), a program offered by the Pennsylvania Bar Association in partnership with ABA Free Legal Answers. This project connects individuals seeking advice on civil legal matters to a pro bono attorney.

Read Chief Justice Todd's full letter [here](#).

Pennsylvania Courts Announce New Data-Based Initiative to Better Support Court Users with Autism

Pennsylvanians on the autism spectrum are integral members of our families, workplaces, and communities. Supreme Court Justice Kevin Dougherty recently [announced](#) a new data collection initiative intended to identify minors with autism at entry into the PA court system. This project will allow county, judicial, and law enforcement agencies to be better informed and prepared to support individuals with autism in dependency cases.

"At no point has the statement 'the earlier the better' been more important than right now," urged Justice Dougherty. "We need to learn as much about the people, especially the children, who come into the system as soon as we can to better serve the goal of achieved justice. The system needs to be structured to meet *their* needs, and by doing so, we set people and families up to succeed regardless of the legal or life challenges they face." Justice Dougherty currently serves on the [Autism in the Courts Task Force](#).

Visit the Unified Judicial System's website for more information about [Autism and the Courts](#).

New Infographic Offers a Closer Look at Protection from Abuse Orders in Pennsylvania

The Unified Judicial System recently [released](#) a new infographic highlighting key data about 2021 protection from abuse (PFA) orders in Pennsylvania. A PFA order is "a civil court order to help protect victims of domestic violence, providing relief from abuse by an intimate partner, family [member], or household member." A PFA order can mandate that an abuser have no contact (including electronic communication) with the victim or victim's children; avoid the victim's home, school, or workplace; and surrender any weapons. Last year, over 38,000 new petitions requesting relief under the [PFA Act](#) were filed across the commonwealth.

Visit the Unified Judicial System's website for more information about [protection orders](#).

A closer look at statewide PFA filings



What is a PFA?

A protection from abuse (PFA) order is a civil court order to help protect victims of domestic violence, providing relief from abuse by an intimate partner, family or household member.

In 2021:

38,765 new petitions requesting relief under the PFA Act (Title 23, Chp. 61) were filed

90% of temporary PFAs filed (valid until a final hearing) were granted

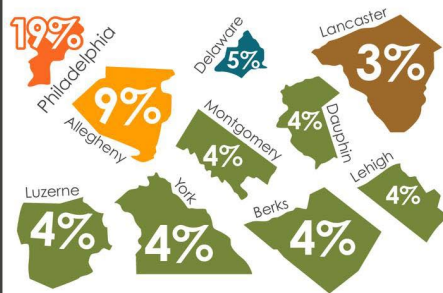
In 2021, the number of PFA's filed increased by 12% from 2020.



A PFA can order an abuser to:

- Have **no** contact with the victim or victim's children including: no texting, no calling, no communication via social media
- Leave the home where the victim lives
- Relinquish any weapons

Top 10 counties with highest number of new PFA cases in 2021:



Percentages given reflect the percent of total state filings.

PFA case outcomes:

	processed cases	% of total
Plaintiff did not appear in court	9,469	(25%)
Withdrawn by plaintiff	8,544	(23%)
Final order granted	7,165	(19%)
Agreement reached between parties	6,183	(16%)
Temporary order dismissed/denied	4,351	(11%)
Final order denied	1,962	(5%)
Case transferred/other dispositions	231	(1%)

Total # of PFA cases disposed in 2021: **37,905**

Learn more at <http://www.pacourts.us/learn/protection-orders>

Additional data, including county-level data, is available at <http://www.pacourts.us/news-and-statistics/research-and-statistics/>. This data does not include Protection from Sexual Violence or Intimidation (PSVI) filings (42 Pa. C.S. § 62A).

AOPC

From the Pennsylvania Bar Association



Matthew M. Holliday Named Next Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Bar Association

On November 14, 2022, the Pennsylvania Bar Association announced the appointment of Matthew M. Holliday as its next executive director. Holliday's tenure as executive director-elect will

commence on January 2, 2023. Currently executive director of the Chester County Bar Association and the Chester County Bar Foundation, Holliday has “a track record of growing membership, broadening community partnerships, and expanding benefits and services for lawyer members,” lauded PBA President Jay N. Silberblatt.

Barry M. Simpson, the PBA’s longest-serving executive director, earlier this year announced his plan to retire in May 2023.

Read the full appointment announcement on the PBA’s [website](#).

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

[Pending Cases](#)

[Recent Cases](#)

[Case Research Collection](#)

[Attorney Gateway](#)

[Rules](#)

[Search Opinions](#)

[FAQs – For the Public](#)

[FAQs – For Attorneys](#)

[Pro Bono](#)

[Annual Report](#)

[PA CLE Board](#)

[Discipline Statistics](#)

Copyright (C) 2022 The Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania,
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 5600, PO Box 62625, Harrisburg, PA 17106