



The
DISCIPLINARY BOARD
of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

February 2026
Newsletter



The Keystone Lex

From the Chair

On behalf of the Disciplinary Board, I would like to extend our most sincere congratulations to Shohin H. Vance, Esq. and Laura E. Ellsworth, Esq. who were recently appointed the next Board Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, effective April 1, 2026. I feel confident in the Board's future and in the future professional standards held for Pennsylvania's legal profession.

Serving this Commonwealth and its legal profession has been one of the great honors of my career. While rarely easy, the importance of the work undertaken by this organization cannot be overstated.



I would also like to commend all Board Members and staff who participated in this year's recent National Council for Lawyer Disciplinary Boards (NCLDB) annual conference. Members of the PA delegation took large roles in the organization and facilitation of this year's event. The yearly conference is an invaluable opportunity for disciplinary adjudicators from across the United States and Canada to gather for professional development, collaboration, and networking. It is crucial to the progress of our field that we be able to learn from the unique perspectives and experiences of our colleagues in other jurisdictions. Congratulations to all who took part.

Stay well,

David S. Senoff
Board Chair

Remembering Justice Sandra Schultz Newman

Pennsylvania Mourns the Passing of Retired Justice Sandra Schultz Newman, the First Woman Elected to PA's Supreme Court

Hon. Sandra Schultz Newman, the first woman elected to Pennsylvania's Supreme Court, [passed away](#) on February 2, 2026.

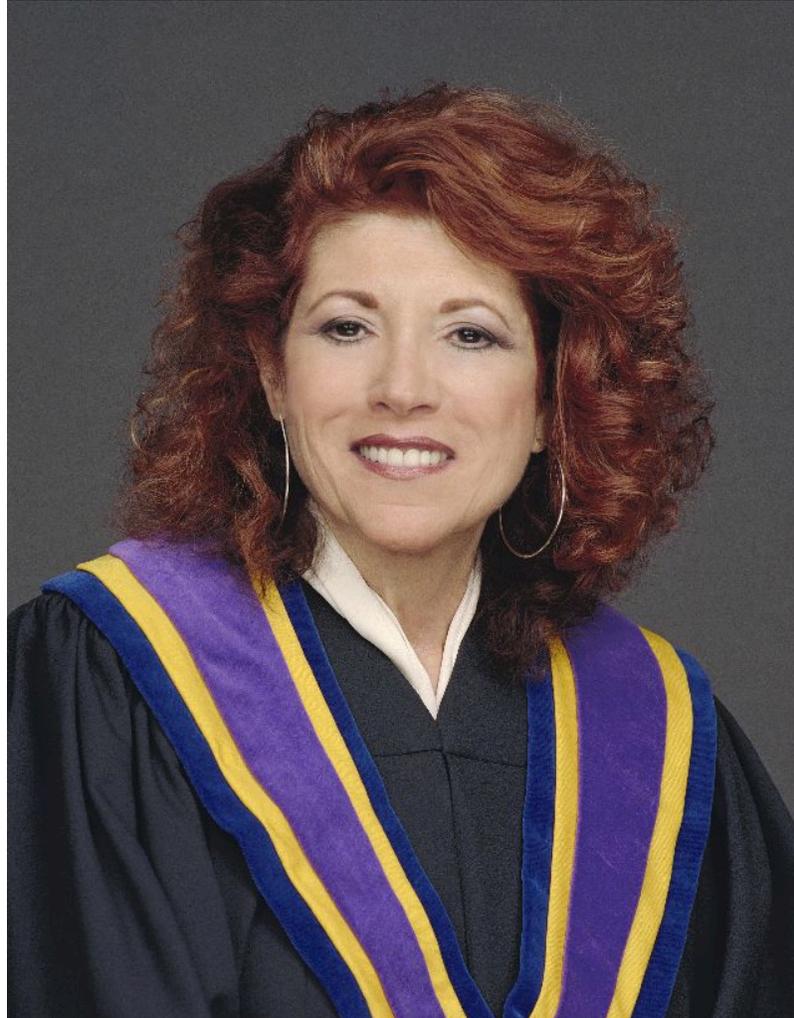
Prior to her tenure on the Supreme Court, Justice Newman was the first female Assistant District Attorney in Montgomery County. In 1993, Justice Newman was then elected to the

Commonwealth Court of PA. Just two years later, she was elected to the PA Supreme Court, becoming the first woman elected to the Commonwealth's highest bench. Justice Newman retired from her position in 2006. The PA Supreme Court courtroom in Philadelphia was recently named in her honor.

Justice Newman also co-founded the Drexel University College of Law (now, the Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law) and served on its Board of Overseers.

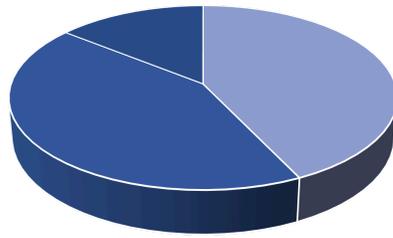
Earlier this week, Chief Justice Debra Todd, also a history maker as the first woman to serve as PA's Chief Justice, [remarked](#), "Justice Newman's tenure on the bench was defined by integrity, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to fairness and the rule of law. She was a remarkable jurist, public servant, and trailblazer for women, whose work and impact will leave a legacy beyond the bench."

The Members and staff of the Disciplinary Board grieve the passing of Justice Sandra Schultz Newman and offer their deepest condolences to her loved ones and colleagues.



Discipline Imposed

January 2026



- Informal Admonition - 0
- Private Reprimand - 0
- Public Reprimand - 3
- Public Censure - 0
- Disability Inactive - 0
- Temporary Suspension - 0
- Probation - 0
- Suspension - 3
- Disbarment - 1

Public Reprimand

[Kelton Merrill Burgess](#)
[Shaka Mzee Johnson](#)
[Ian James Musselman](#)

Suspension

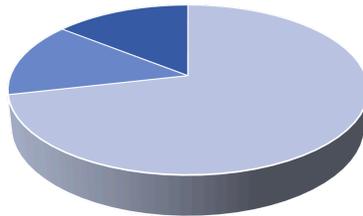
[Joseph A. Cerroni, Jr.](#)
[Brad Joseph Koplinski](#)
[Brian Joseph McCormick, Jr.](#)

Disbarment

[Michael J. Sangemino](#)

Reinstatements

January 2026



- From Inactive - 5
- From Retired - 0
- From Administrative Suspension - 1
- From Disability Inactive - 0
- From Suspension - 1
- From Disbarment - 0
- Reinstatement Denied - 0

From Inactive

[Elizabeth Sarah Cooperstein](#)
[Julia Lyn Fiorentino](#)
[James Edward Hesler, III](#)
[Barbara D. Mallory Sampat](#)
[Kathryn Warren Metosky](#)

From Administrative Suspension

[Clare Helen Dooley](#)

From Suspension

[Steven Ostroff](#)

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 Announces Next Chair and Vice-Chair

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has appointed Shohin H. Vance, Esq., as Disciplinary Board

Chair and Laura E. Ellsworth, Esq., as Disciplinary Board Vice-Chair, effective April 1, 2026.

Shohin H. Vance, Esq.

Mr. Vance is a shareholder in the Saxton & Stump Appellate and Post-Trial Advocacy Group and contributes his deep experience to the Commercial Litigation and Regulatory and Government Affairs groups. He was appointed to the Disciplinary Board in April 2021 and was appointed Vice-Chair on April 1, 2025. His term will expire in April 2027.

He is widely recognized across Pennsylvania for his work in politically sensitive and high-stakes litigation, particularly in election law, government disputes, and constitutional matters.

Throughout his career, Mr. Vance has represented clients in matters before the U.S. Supreme Court, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, and other state and federal courts. Before joining Saxton & Stump, Mr. Vance was a partner at a Philadelphia law firm where he was instrumental in building its influential political law practice.

In addition, he commenced his legal career as a law clerk to Chief Justice Thomas G. Saylor of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Before attending Penn State Dickinson Law, he worked for one of the top government relations and political consulting firms in the state where he played a key role in several public policy victories and developed an extensive résumé in campaign consulting, earned media, press relations, and grassroots organization.

Laura E. Ellsworth, Esq.

Laura Ellsworth was first appointed to the Board in May 2022, and her term will expire in April 2027.

Ms. Ellsworth is Of Counsel at Jones Day. She served as the law firm's first Partner-in-Charge of Global Community Service Initiatives, and she continues to lead that work in her Of Counsel role.

In her litigation practice, she has handled landmark public nuisance cases, multijurisdictional product liability matters, the largest health care bankruptcy of its time, and nationwide *qui tam* cases. Ms. Ellsworth has been active in civic and community affairs, serving in leadership roles on the United Way Women's Leadership Council, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, and more.

Through her pro bono work and nonprofit involvement, she has proven a passion and commitment to improving access to justice in disadvantaged communities, having taught law classes in inner-city schools and conducted recurring Lawyers Without Borders programs in Nairobi, Kenya.

In addition to her prior appointments by governors to Pennsylvania's State System for Higher Education, Council on Privatization and Innovation, and Council on the Arts, Ms. Ellsworth has served on the boards for many civic and charitable organizations and public companies – including Magee-Women's Research Institute & Foundation, Waynesburg University, McCune Foundation and University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics.

She has also previously served on committees for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania including the Local Rules Advisory Committee and as co-chair of the Federal Judicial Selection Committee.



Disciplinary Board Attends 2026 Annual NCLDB Conference

Each year, the National Council of Lawyer Disciplinary Boards (NCLDB) holds its annual conference, bringing together disciplinary adjudicators and staff from around the United States and Canada. This year's conference, held from February 12th-13th, featured educational sessions on a variety of topics ranging from efficiency in adjudication to the ethics of generative AI in the legal profession.

Gillian Chadwick, Professor of Law at Washburn University School of Law, and Hon. Mary Pat Gunderson, Retired District Court Judge of Polk County, Iowa, kicked off the conference with a discussion on adjudication of attorney sexual misconduct, particularly against clients. Their compelling presentation articulated unique challenges that arise in sexual misconduct cases and also provided practical guidance for handling such matters with "rigor, fairness, and sensitivity to trauma."

Constance A. Anastopoulo, President and Professor of Law at Charleston School of Law, delivered this year's keynote speech. President Anastopoulo stressed the importance of the work of attorney discipline as well as the significance of civility and professionalism. Always an educator, President Anastopoulo offered her time and wisdom, answering myriad audience questions as each attending jurisdiction values the well-being and support of the next generation of lawyers.



Other conference sessions addressed flat fee arrangements, reciprocal discipline, the relationship between prosecutors and adjudicators in bar discipline, and more. Pennsylvania Disciplinary Board Special Counsel Kimberly M. Henderson and Board Prothonotary Marcee D. Sloan delivered a session exploring how to recruit a diverse and highly-qualified Hearing Committee pool in addition to best practices to effectively train and support those Hearing Committee Members.

Board Vice-Chair Shohin H. Vance presented one of the two (the other being from the California delegation) state mini-sessions. Vice-Chair Vance provided a brief overview of the adjudication of *In the Matter of Anthony C. Cappuccio* and led a discussion on differing state practices regarding adjudication.

PA Disciplinary Board staff member Lauren Chavey-Dinh currently serves as President-Elect of the NCLDB Board of Directors, and Disciplinary Board Prothonotary Marcee D. Sloan serves as Secretary. Disciplinary Board Executive Director Jesse G. Hereda serves as an Ex Officio Director, having served as President from July 2023 through June 2024.



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.

February		
February 23-24	Jeffrey Larkin Wertz	Disciplinary Hearing
March		
March 2	Bruce K. Warren, Jr.	Disciplinary Hearing
March 17-18	Joseph Alexander Scioscia, III	Disciplinary Hearing
March 25-26	Feng Li	Reinstatement Hearing
March 30-31	Erin Alma Pohland	Reinstatement Hearing
April		
April 13	Marco di Prato	Disciplinary Hearing
April 27-28	Lawrence L. Rubin	Disciplinary Hearing
May		
May 4-5	David Paul Clark	Disciplinary Hearing
May 7	David Charles Agresti	Reinstatement Hearing
May 11-13	Aaron Bell	Disciplinary Hearing
May 21	Justin R. Przedziecki	Disciplinary Hearing
June		
June 2-4	Joshua Paul Ward	Disciplinary Hearing
June 8-9	Timothy Reitz	Disciplinary Hearing
June 15-17	Travis Andrew Gordon	Disciplinary Hearing
June 24-25	Marco di Prato (cont.)	Disciplinary Hearing
June 26	Thomas McCarthy	Disciplinary Hearing
June 29-30	Elissa Griffith Waldron	Reinstatement Hearing
July		
July 20-21	Dustin William Cole (cont.)	Disciplinary Hearing
August		
August 4-5	Shahily Negron	Disciplinary Hearing
To Be Scheduled		
Robert M. Tobia – Public Reprimand		

CDC Corner

Recidivism

Recently, at the request of our incoming Board Chair, Shohin Vance, the Executive Office and ODC examined the recidivism rate over the last ten years for lawyers reinstated after being suspended or disbarred. Our findings were a bit surprising but also encouraging: An overwhelming majority of suspended or disbarred attorneys did not seek reinstatement. But, of those who did and were granted reinstatement, over ninety percent did not receive subsequent discipline.

If a suspension is one year or less, reinstatement is generally immediate upon completion of the term of suspension, compliance with Pa.R.D.E. 217, and payment of a \$250 filing fee. See Pa. R.D.E. 218(g).

Longer suspensions and disbarments lead to a different reinstatement path: The attorney must petition for reinstatement and undergo a hearing before a hearing committee with review by the Board and the Court. At that hearing, the attorney has the burden of proving by clear and convincing evidence the same "moral qualifications, competency and learning in law required for admission to practice law in this Commonwealth . . ." and that his or her return to practice does not subvert the bar's integrity, the administration of justice or the public interest. Pa. R.D.E. 218(c)

(3).

The data presented below includes matters concluded between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2025. It counts only disciplinary suspensions, not administrative suspensions due to an attorney choosing inactive or retired status or failing to register or complete CLE requirements.

Total Suspensions or Disbarments:	707	
Total Reinstatement from Discipline Applications Withdrawn	31	4.4% of Suspensions and Disbarments
Total Reinstatement from Discipline Applications Denied	25	3.5% of Suspensions and Disbarments
Total Reinstatement from Discipline Applications Granted	124	17.5% of Suspensions and Disbarments
Total Respondents with Public Discipline subsequent to Reinstatement:	11	8.9% of Reinstatements from Discipline

A few explanations are in order. First, we computerized our data collection system only in 2015. Any numbers from the disciplinary system's first forty years can be unreliable and difficult to retrieve. Thus, the figure of eleven in line five includes all respondents in the system's history who received discipline subsequent to reinstatement where the subsequent discipline occurred since January 1, 2015 or was otherwise easily discoverable by staff.

Second, we restricted the examination to respondents who initially were suspended or disbarred, not those who receive lesser forms of discipline. We did so because our principal interest was the effectiveness of the reinstatement process, which applies only to lawyers who receive at least a suspension. Third, there is somewhat of a disconnect in the first and fifth lines of the table, the comparison of the number of attorneys suspended or disbarred in the last ten years and the number of attorneys reinstated in the last ten years. Ten of the eleven recidivist attorneys received their initial suspension or disbarment farther back than ten years. One was suspended in 1975, reinstated in 2007, and suspended again in 2008. It could be argued that rather than compare the eleven to the 708 suspended or disbarred in the last ten years (a recidivism rate of 1.6%), they should be compared to the 2,800 suspended or disbarred since 1975 which yields a recidivism rate of .04%.

Of course, the data suggest other conclusions and questions. Many lawyers who are suspended never seek to be reinstated—in fact, the vast majority do not, even those who are suspended for one year or less. Why that is, I cannot say. Further, lack of subsequent discipline does not guarantee that a reinstated lawyer practiced fault-free. Many violations go undetected or unreported. Many clients resolve dissatisfaction with their lawyers' conduct outside the disciplinary system.

Still, we can evaluate only what we can measure. And, from this measure, we can conclude that the disciplinary system does a good job of evaluating and screening reinstatement applicants to ensure that only demonstrably fit lawyers are reinstated to practice.

Thomas J. Farrell
Chief Disciplinary Counsel

Articles of Interest

Cases of Interest from 2025

Each year, we publish a recap of cases of note decided during the year. We focus on cases that shed light on the developing state of the practice of law, novel fact situations, and Rules of Professional Conduct not often raised. The following cases from 2025 caught our interest:

[Jason Eric Fine, No. 5 DB 2025](#)

This matter arose from a lawyer's practice of arranging litigation loans for clients in advance of receipt of settlement funds. He admitted that he had referred 174 clients to a trucking company for presettlement loans without revealing that the company was owned by his father-in-law. He argued that this did not represent a conflict of interest because he did not personally benefit from the loans and was not a "parent, child, sibling, or spouse" of the lender within the meaning of

Comment 11 to Rule 1.17 of the RPC. However, he conceded that the practice violated [Rule 1.7\(a\)\(2\)](#), conflict of interest, and [Rule 1.8\(e\)](#), providing financial assistance to a client. He consented to imposition of a Public Reprimand.

[Erik Mark Helbing, No. 120 DB 2023](#)

A Schuykill County lawyer received a Public Reprimand for providing loan modification and debt relief services in six states. The Disciplinary Board found that he had failed to provide adequate services, rendering his fees excessive, failed to state in his retainer agreement that he was not admitted to practice in the jurisdictions in which clients resided, and failed to properly supervise his staff. The Board noted that [RPC 5.7](#), addressing nonlegal services provided in connection with a law practice, provides that a lawyer is subject to the Rules of Professional Conduct if the lawyer “knows or reasonably should know that the recipient might believe that the recipient is receiving the protection of a client-lawyer relationship.” Helbing conceded that he should have known his clients would consider his relationship with them an attorney-client relationship.

[Brian Dooley Kent, No. 37 DB 2025](#)

This matter arose out of an attorney’s emotional and romantic involvement with a client.

Kent had a reputation as an advocate for victims of sexual abuse. The client retained him for a case against the Church of Scientology, alleging sexual abuse. The client lived in Australia. The Joint Petition recites that Kent and the client exchanged thousands of messages via text, telephone calls, emails, and WhatsApp. These communications soon veered into personal matters including expressions of interest in a sexual relationship and sexually oriented messages. During these communications, he expressed his concerns about maintaining a “professional distance,” and she spoke of being “stressed and confused.”

On two occasions, he traveled to Los Angeles to meet with the client which led to encounters in his hotel room in which she gave him a massage and they engaged in sexual touching, though not intercourse.

Kent subsequently informed the client that his firm would not represent her in the lawsuit, and she retained other counsel.

Kent admitted that his conduct violated [RPC 1.7\(a\)\(2\)](#) [representing a client when there is a concurrent conflict of interest], [RPC 1.8\(j\)](#) [sexual relations with a client when there was not a preexisting relationship], and [RPC 1.16\(a\)\(1\)](#) [failure to withdraw when continuing representation will result in a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct]. Kent consented to a suspension for three years with one year served and two years stayed with two years’ probation.

[Gary P. Lightman, No. 103 DB 2024](#)

This is also a case involving inappropriate sexual behavior toward a client.

Lightman represented a woman in sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and hostile workplace environment claims against her employer. He referred her to counsel in New York State who filed a lawsuit in that jurisdiction with Lightman engaged to provide work on the case and receive a share of the recovery. Lightman and the client made plans to meet near her home in Florida to discuss the case. He arrived at her condo to pick her up for the meeting and asked to use the bathroom. While passing through her bedroom from the bathroom, he made an unwelcome verbal sexual advance. When she became upset at the advance, he told her to “lighten up.” When he brought her back to the condo after their lunch meeting, he again made an unwelcome verbal advance. After that, he held late-night or early-morning telephone calls with her, during some of which he made inappropriate sexual comments, and complained that she lacked a sense of humor. After the last such conversation, she terminated his representation.

Lightman acknowledged that his conduct was wrongful and in violation of [New York Rule of Professional Conduct 1.7\(a\)\(2\)](#) which states, “[A] lawyer shall not represent a client if a reasonable lawyer would conclude that ... there is a significant risk that the lawyer’s professional judgment on behalf of a client will be adversely affected by the lawyer’s own financial, business, property or other personal interests.” He consented to a six-month suspension, stayed with six months’ probation.

[Rebecca Catherine Stein, No. 39 DB 2024](#)

This matter addressed an attorney’s fiduciary responsibilities for conduct outside the practice of

law.

Stein served as Treasurer of the Fort Pitt Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Fort Pitt Blockhouse in 2018. In this capacity, she had sole authority to write checks on the organizations' investment accounts which amounted to approximately \$500,000. When a new Treasurer was appointed, Stein failed to turn over the organizations' computer or to add the new Treasurer as a signatory on the accounts for several months. An investigation revealed that Stein had written checks in excess of \$315,000 without seeking approval of the Board of Directors as required by policy; only \$37,000 were legitimate organization expenses. The rest were for her own benefit including payments to personal credit cards and accounts. She had falsified records to conceal these payments.

Stein was charged with several theft-related offenses and pled guilty to Misapplication of Entrusted Funds, [18 Pa.C.S. §4113\(a\)](#), a misdemeanor. She was sentenced to two years of probation. By agreement of the parties to discipline on consent, the Supreme Court suspended Stein for three years.

Florida Supreme Court Rejects Special Admission for Government Lawyers

The Supreme Court of Florida [rejected](#) a proposal from Attorney General James Uthmeier that would have allowed certain lawyers admitted in other states to practice in Florida without ever taking the state's bar exam.

The proposal [would have allowed](#) lawyers already licensed and in good standing in other states to work for Florida government offices for up to three years without passing the Florida exam. Uthmeier argued that the state and public sector agencies are finding it difficult to recruit enough lawyers to meet needs. Florida, unlike most states, [does not allow](#) reciprocal admission of lawyers in good standing in other jurisdictions.

The petition [argued](#), "In many cases, those lawyers forgo or leave much more lucrative employment in private practice to serve the public. Importantly, moving to Florida and taking the Florida Bar examination is often a key impediment because of the timing of their government appointment and the dates the bar examination is given."

However, the Florida Bar, which has long jealously guarded admission to the state bar, objected to the proposal, arguing that it would violate part of the state Constitution that gives the Supreme Court "exclusive jurisdiction to regulate the admission of persons to the practice of law," giving that authority to the executive.

In a one-paragraph order, the Florida Supreme Court unanimously denied the petition, noting that the current certification program requires a certified government lawyer to have applied for admission to the Florida bar and to take the next available bar examination. The Court found that this requirement "strikes the appropriate balance between accommodating the government's workforce needs and ensuring that those authorized to practice law in Florida possess the requisite knowledge of Florida law, technical skill and moral character to do so."

ABA Formal Opinion Addresses Information Revealed in Motion to Withdraw

On December 5, 2025, the ABA's Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility issued [Formal Opinion No. 519](#), [addressing](#) disclosure of information relating to the representation in a motion to withdraw from a representation.

[The Opinion](#) begins with a recitation of the provision of the Rules of Professional Conduct regarding withdrawal under [Rule 1.16](#). The Committee concludes, "A lawyer may disclose information relating to the representation only if the client gives informed consent, the court orders the lawyer to do so, or the lawyer is required to do so by court rules or other applicable law, or there is an applicable exception to the duty of confidentiality."

The Committee notes that different courts may require different levels of disclosure in support of a lawyer's application to withdraw. Some have given lawyers broad latitude to disclose client information, and some have disciplined lawyers for revealing too much in the application. Some have taken a middle ground by allowing lawyers to submit information relating to the representation *in camera* or under seal to the extent necessary to support a withdrawal motion.

Disclosure of information is easier to justify if the lawyer can obtain the client's informed consent to the withdrawal or, if necessary, to the disclosure of information. If the lawyer cannot obtain client consent, and the court requires an explanation, the lawyer should keep disclosure of information about the client relationship to a minimum. The Opinion notes that Comment 3 to Rule 1.16 states, "The lawyer's statement that professional considerations require termination of the representation ordinarily should be accepted as sufficient." Circumstances that do not relate to the attorney-client relationship, such as health conditions or personal circumstances that inhibit the lawyer's ability to continue, may be revealed. [Rule 1.6\(b\)](#) sets forth some exceptions to the principle of confidentiality. It allows a lawyer to reveal information, such as the need to prevent reasonably certain death or substantial bodily harm, to prevent the client from committing a crime or fraud and to prevent, mitigate, or rectify substantial injury to the financial interests or property of another. A lawyer may reveal information to a limited extent if the judge orders the lawyer to make further disclosure. The lawyer may also reveal a limited amount of information about payment when the termination is for failure to pay the lawyer's fees. The Opinion discusses some other circumstances where limited disclosure is allowed.

The last portion of the Opinion sets forth a multi-step approach the lawyer may follow in obtaining leave to withdraw, including submitting a bare-bones motion to withdraw, then providing escalating levels of information if the Court insists on further disclosure.

The Opinion concludes, "Ultimately, the lawyer's paramount duty is to preserve client confidentiality, even at the risk that the tribunal may deny the motion to withdraw. The Rules require that any disclosure in support of withdrawal be narrowly tailored, protective of the client's interests, and undertaken only within the scope of an applicable exception."

Note that this Opinion is advisory only. It is not binding on the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania or any other Court.

ABA Provides Ethical Guidance for Lawyers Changing Firms

The American Bar Association has published an article written by Pennsylvania-licensed attorney [Jennifer Ellis](#), setting forth [ethical considerations](#) for lawyers changing law firms. She addresses ten points, briefly summarized as follows:

1. *Contacting the Affected Clients:* The lawyer should make sure appropriate notice is given to all clients. Firm policies may provide guidance, but firm policies must comply with ethical requirements.
2. *Do Not Restrict the Client's Choice:* Lawyers and firms should bear in mind that the client has the choice of whether to stay with the firm, transfer to the departing lawyer, or retain an entirely different firm.
3. *Do Not Attack the Firm or Other Attorneys:* It is inappropriate for either the firm or the departing attorney to denigrate the other. It is better to focus on the positive.
4. *Create a Joint Notice if Possible:* It is recommended that the lawyer and firm cooperate in the creation of a professional notice that informs the client of their options. The article sets forth list of matters to be addressed.
5. *When the Firm and Departing Lawyer Cannot Cooperate:* If the firm and lawyer cannot agree on a notice, it is appropriate that both provide notices that clearly and accurately set forth the client's options.
6. *Checking for Conflicts:* The article provides a list of practices and precautions that should be taken to prevent the development of conflicts of interest with either the old or new firm, and to implement screening procedures where needed.
7. *Managing Files and Property:* The article notes that different approaches may be necessary for electronic and physical documents. In any event, the client's directions should be followed as to all data and property.
8. *Proper Termination:* If a client wishes to stay with the firm, chooses a different firm, or the lawyer decides not to continue with the client, it is important to handle termination of representation appropriately as required under Model Rule 1.16. Motions to withdraw from cases may be needed.

9. *Supervisory Responsibilities*: Lawyers with supervisory responsibility over other lawyers or staff should make certain their obligations as both a supervisor and an employee under Model Rules 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 are attended to.

10. *After Departing*: Upon getting established with a new firm, the lawyer should follow up with clients, especially those who have chosen to continue with the lawyer, that their files were properly transferred and the transfer carried out. The author suggests documenting this process in case problems arise.

In conclusion, the author states, "The key principle to remember is that, when changing firms, the ethical priority is to put client interests first, maintain confidentiality, and manage conflicts responsibly. At the same time, the old firm must respect the departing lawyer's right to depart, and all lawyers and staff should respect both firms' operational needs."

Justice Jackson Writes "Calvinball" Into Supreme Court History

Ken Bresler, owner of [Clear Writing Company](#), gives a nod to Supreme Court Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson for bringing forward his choice of the [Legal Term of the Year](#): "Calvinball."

For those who were not followers of Bill Watterston's late lamented comic *Calvin and Hobbes* (1985-1995), [Calvinball](#) was the favorite game of Calvin and his tiger companion, Hobbes. It is characterized by a complete lack of fixed rules, allowing any player to make up rules on the spot. As Calvin himself [said](#), the only permanent rule is that you can't play it the same way twice. Sometimes the results can be [humiliating](#), or even [turned against the creator himself](#).

In the following decades, "Calvinball" has been [turned into](#) a word of common usage, including in legal circles. It has even found its way into the [Oxford English Dictionary](#).

Bresler states that the term was [highlighted](#) by Justice Jackson in her dissent in the matter of [National Institutes of Health v. American Public Health Association](#) (August 21, 2025). She began her opinion, "This is Calvinball jurisprudence with a twist. Calvinball has only one rule: There are no fixed rules. We seem to have two: that one, and this Administration always wins." Justice Jackson's citation has in turn enshrined "Calvinball jurisprudence" as a term at [Dictionary.com](#).

For those curious about evolving legal terminology, [Bresler's Law Dictionary](#), while not as comprehensive as traditional legal dictionaries, provides an interesting list of emerging terms that other dictionaries may not have picked up yet.

Attorney Well-Being

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers' Brian S. Quinn to Host Virtual Event on Internet and Sport Gambling Addiction

In partnership with the Western Pennsylvania chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel, [Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers'](#) Education and Outreach Coordinator, Brian S. Quinn, Esq., will host a free virtual event exploring addiction to internet gambling and sports betting on Wednesday, February 25th at 12:00pm. "[Internet and Sports Gambling - A 'Secret' Addiction No More](#)" will address "not only Gambling Disorder but also the connection between gambling and the more well-known forms of impairment and why lawyers are at higher risk to develop problems."

Learn more and register [here](#).

Internet and Sports Gambling -
A "Secret" Addiction No More
February 25, 2026 | 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM EST



BRIAN QUINN
EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR,
LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR LAWYERS
OF PENNSYLVANIA, INC.

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers Seeking Law Students and Recent Graduates to Volunteers

[Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers](#) is looking to diversify its volunteer team, bringing in younger volunteers to provide confidential peer support to lawyers and law students across the Commonwealth.

This opportunity is open to 2L and 3L law students in Pennsylvania as well as recent graduates. Email Carley Eisel at carley@lclpa.org or call 1-800-335-2572 for more information. Each volunteer's experience can help someone navigating mental health, substance use, grief, burnout, or other life challenges!

LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR LAWYERS
PENNSYLVANIA

ARE YOU A LAWYER, LAW
STUDENT OR JUDGE?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE OF
SERVICE TO YOUR PEERS?

- √ *Have you overcome a mental health or substance use challenge, or have you been affected by someone else's substance use or mental health issues?*
- √ *Have you been working a program of sustained recovery for at least one year? (e.g. support groups, counseling, treatment)*

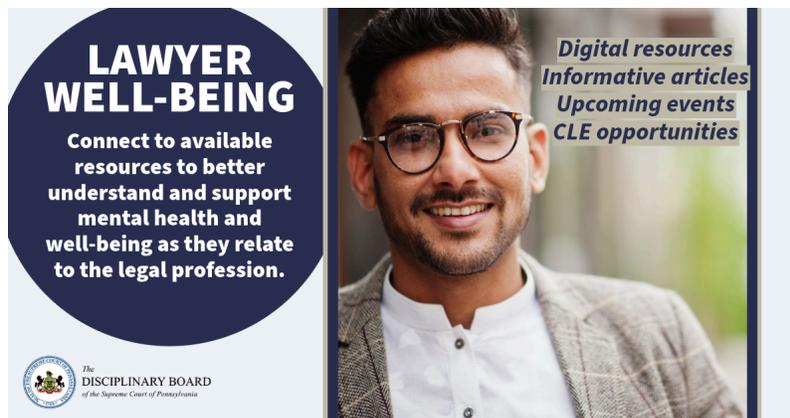
Call LCL today to join our statewide
peer volunteer network.

1-800-335-2572

Get free CLE credits on our website!
www.lclpa.org

Explore the Disciplinary Board's Lawyer Well-Being Webpage

The Disciplinary Board's "[Lawyer 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 "Lawyer Well-Being" page, visit padisiplinaryboard.org/for-attorneys/well-being.



**LAWYER
WELL-BEING**

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

*Digital resources
Informative articles
Upcoming events
CLE opportunities*

 The
DISCIPLINARY BOARD
of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

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



Human Trafficking Offenses Featured in New Court Infographic

January is [Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#), and the Unified Judicial System recently [released](#) a new infographic featuring human trafficking offenses in Pennsylvania. Human trafficking is "a type of human rights abuse where people profit from the exploitation of others – mainly using force, fraud or coercion to manipulate victims into engaging in sex acts or labor/services in exchange for something of value."

Types of human trafficking offenses include trafficking in individuals, involuntary servitude, obstruction of justice, trafficking in minors, and patronizing a victim of human trafficking/sexual servitude. As the graphic highlights, victims of trafficking often do not have access to their identification or travel documents, are not in control of their own finances, own few personal possessions, work excessive and unusual hours with little to no pay, and do not have a clear home address.

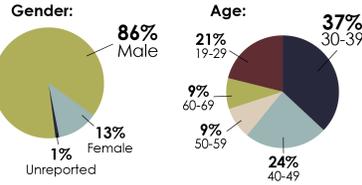
Read the full press release [here](#) on the UJS website.

Human Trafficking in Pennsylvania



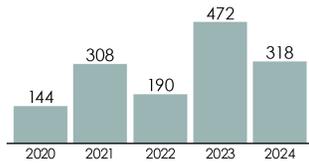
Human trafficking is a type of human rights abuse where people profit from the exploitation of others – mainly through the use of **force, fraud or coercion** to manipulate victims into engaging in sex acts or labor/services in exchange for something of value. Those under age 18 who exchange sex for something of value are human trafficking victims, regardless of whether force, fraud or coercion is involved.

Demographics of defendants convicted:



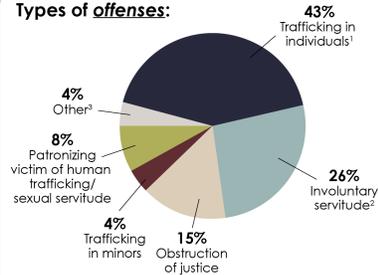
431 human-trafficking cases were filed over the past five years.

1,432 total human-trafficking offenses were filed:



Please note, there is a large increase in offenses filed from 2022 to 2023 (145% increase). This is due to one case filed in Franklin County with 200 human trafficking offenses and a case in Dauphin County with 39 human trafficking offenses.

Types of offenses:



¹ recruits/entices/solicits

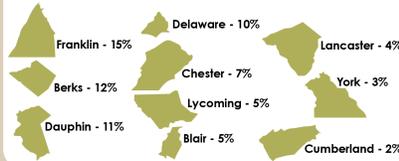
² duress through force, debt coercion, physical restraint, etc.

³ unlawful conduct, nonpayment of wages

Victims of human trafficking may:

1. Not have access to their own **travel or ID documents**
2. Not be in control of their own **financial records, money or bank account**
3. Have very few **personal possessions**
4. Work excessively **long/unusual hours** with little or no pay
5. Not able to clarify **their address/living situation**

Counties with highest number of human-trafficking offenses filed:



All human trafficking data from 1/1/2020 to 12/31/2024. Human trafficking offenses filed and disposed as convictions as recorded in Pennsylvania's Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) and Magisterial District Judge System (MDJS), Title 18, sections 3012 (A and B), 3015 (A2), 3016, 3015 (A), 3011 (A, A2, A1, B) and 3014.



From the Pennsylvania Bar Association

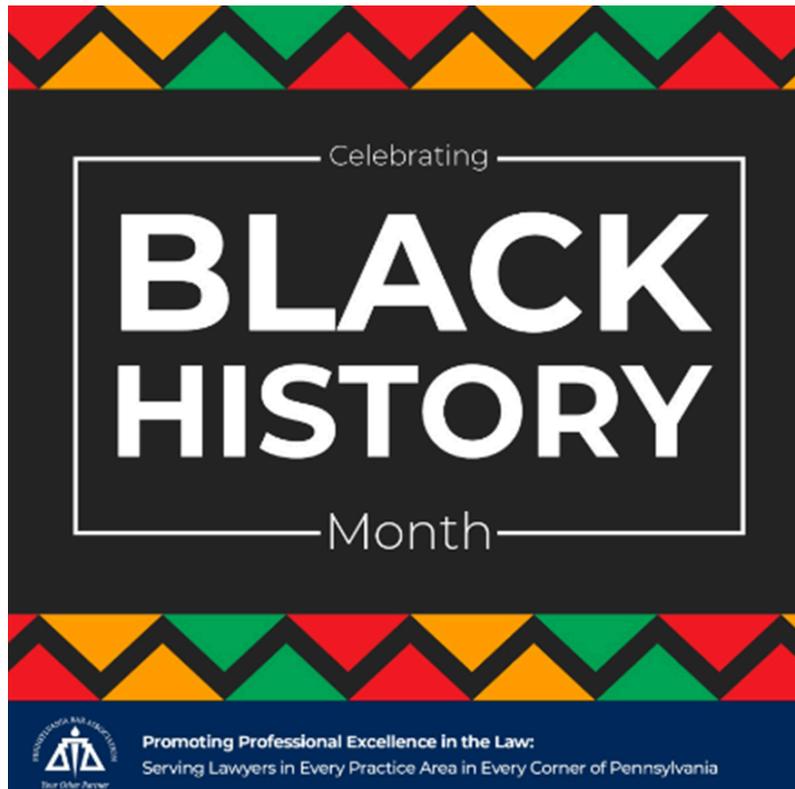


Updates from the Pennsylvania Bar Association

Celebrating Black History Month

Black History Month invites every attorney across the commonwealth to reflect on the people whose courage and scholarship reshaped our legal system and expanded the meaning of justice in America. It is a moment to honor the Black lawyers, judges, and advocates who pushed the law forward and a reminder that their work continues through us.

Whether practicing in a courtroom, a classroom, or a community setting, this month encourages learning, listening, and renewed commitment to fairness and access to justice. As Pennsylvania's legal community recognizes the past and its impact on our profession today, it must also look ahead to the responsibility shared in building a more equitable future for all who rely on the law. In the days ahead, the PBA invites all to follow along on its social media pages to see these reflections.



PBA Podcasts – Available to All!

This month also marks an exciting moment for the PBA as it continues expanding how it shares stories, expertise, and conversations across the commonwealth. The growing lineup of [PBA podcasts](#) offers members new ways to learn and connect, including:

- *Law in the Family* with its focus on the evolving landscape of family law
- *Death and Dirt* which explores estate issues and real property challenges with practical insight
- *Diversitea with Dr. B* where thoughtful dialogue meets lived experience to deepen understanding of diversity in the legal profession

Together these podcasts reflect the many voices that strengthen Pennsylvania's legal community.

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 pabar.org or follow on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

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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