

CHAPTER 122

AN ACT

SB 381

Relating to the Oregon State Bar; creating new provisions; amending ORS 9.025, 9.080, 9.136, 9.145, 9.200 and 9.210; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

SECTION 1. ORS 9.025 is amended to read:

9.025. (1)(a) The Oregon State Bar shall be governed by a board of governors consisting of [18] **19** members[.]:

(A) Fourteen of the members shall be active members of the Oregon State Bar[*who at the time of appointment, at the time of filing a statement of candidacy, at the time of election, and during the full term for which the member was appointed or elected, maintain the principal office of law practice in the region of this state in which the active members of the Oregon State Bar eligible to vote in the election at which the member was elected maintain their principal offices.*] **elected from the regions established under subsection (2)(a) of this section. A member elected under this subparagraph must maintain the member's principal office in the region for which the member seeks election throughout the member's candidacy and term of office.**

(B) **One member shall be an active member of the Oregon State Bar elected from the region established under subsection (2)(b) of this section. The member elected under this subparagraph must maintain the member's principal office in the region established under subsection (2)(b) of this section throughout the member's candidacy and term of office.**

(C) Four of the members shall be appointed by the board of governors from among the public. [*They shall*] **The public members must be residents of this state throughout their terms of office** and may not be active or inactive members of the Oregon State Bar.

(b) A person charged with official duties under the executive and legislative departments of state government, including but not limited to elected officers of state government, may not serve on the board of governors. Any other person in the executive or legislative department of state government who is otherwise qualified may serve on the board of governors.

(2) The board of governors shall **establish regions for the purpose of electing board members as follows:**

(a) **The board shall divide the State of Oregon into regions for the purpose of [determining eligibility to be a candidate for the board of governors, eligibility to be elected or appointed to the board of governors, and eligibility to vote in board of gov-**

nors elections. The regions shall] electing board members described in subsection (1)(a)(A) of this section. Regions established under this paragraph must be based on the number of attorneys who have their principal offices in the region. To the extent that it is reasonably possible, [the regions shall] regions established under this paragraph must be configured by the board so that the representation of board members to attorney population in each region is equal to the representation provided in other regions. At least once every 10 years the board shall review the number of attorneys in the regions and shall alter or add regions as the board determines is appropriate in seeking to attain the goal of equal representation.

(b) **The board shall establish one region composed of all areas not located in the State of Oregon for the purpose of electing the board member described in subsection (1)(a)(B) of this section.**

(3) Members of the board of governors may be elected only by the active members of the Oregon State Bar who maintain their principal offices in the regions established by the board **under subsection (2) of this section.** The regular term of a member of the board is four years. The board may establish special terms for positions that are shorter than four years for the purpose of staggering the terms of members of the board. The board must identify a position with a special term before accepting statements of candidacy for the region in which the position is located. The board shall establish rules for determining which of the elected members for a region is assigned to the position with a special term.

(4) [No] **A judge of a municipal, state or federal court or any other full-time judicial officer[shall be] is not eligible for appointment or election to the board of governors.**

(5) The term of any member of the board of governors [*shall terminate*] **terminates** on the date of the death or resignation of the member[,] or, if the member of the board is required to be a member of the Oregon State Bar, the term terminates on the date:

(a) Of the termination of active membership in the Oregon State Bar for any reason;

(b) When the member discontinues to maintain the principal office of law practice in the region in which it was maintained at the time of the appointment or election of the member; or

(c) When the member assumes office as a judge of a municipal, state or federal court, or fills a full-time judicial office.

(6) [No] **A member of the board of governors [shall be] is not eligible[,] during the member's term of office[,] for service pro tempore as a judge of any municipal, state or federal court.**

SECTION 2. ORS 9.136 is amended to read:

9.136. (1) The house of delegates of the Oregon State Bar is created. The house consists of elected and ex officio voting delegates. All delegates must be active members of the state bar except for the

public members of the board of governors and the public members appointed by the board pursuant to ORS 9.145.

(2) The members of the board of governors of the Oregon State Bar are ex officio voting delegates.

(3) The chairperson of each Oregon State Bar section is an ex officio voting delegate.

(4) The elected president of each county bar association is an ex officio voting delegate. Not more than one county bar association from each county may be represented by a delegate under this subsection.

(5) Elected delegates shall be elected from the regions established by ORS 9.025 *[and an additional region composed of all areas not located in this state]*. Only active members of the bar may vote for delegates. A member *[who maintains a principal office in one of the regions established by ORS 9.025]* may vote for delegates from the region *[where]* **in which** the member maintains the **member's principal** office. *[A member who does not maintain a principal office in this state but who has an address on file with the bar may vote for delegates from the region composed of all areas not located in this state.]*

(6) Each region shall elect at least five delegates. If more than 550 active members maintain their principal offices in the region, the members shall elect delegates as follows:

(a) The members shall elect one delegate for each 100 members who maintain their principal offices in the region.

(b) The members shall elect one additional delegate if more than 50 members who maintain their principal offices in the region are not accounted for after the allocation provided for in paragraph (a) of this subsection.

(7) Elected delegates shall serve for terms of three years. A vacancy in the office of an elected delegate shall be filled for the remainder of the term by a delegate appointed by the board of governors.

(8) An elected delegate may not serve as a member of the board of governors, as a section chairperson or as a county bar association president during the delegate's term.

(9) For the purposes of this section, "county bar association" means a general purpose bar association established by the lawyers of one or more counties for the purpose of maintaining good professional relations between members of the bench and of the bar in the county or counties, and for the purpose of improving the administration of justice in the county or counties.

SECTION 3. ORS 9.145 is amended to read:

9.145. The board of governors shall appoint a public member delegate for each region **in the State of Oregon** established by ORS 9.025 (2)(a). A public member delegate shall serve a three-year term. A vacant public member delegate position shall be filled for the remainder of the term by a delegate appointed by the board of governors. The appointment of public member delegates shall be made by

the board before the time set for the election of delegates under ORS 9.152. The term of a public member delegate shall commence on the same date that the term of an elected delegate commences.

MEMBERSHIP FEES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY FUND

SECTION 4. ORS 9.080 is amended to read:

9.080. (1) The state bar shall be governed by the board of governors, except as provided in ORS 9.136 to 9.155. The board is charged with the executive functions of the state bar and shall at all times direct its power to the advancement of the science of jurisprudence and the improvement of the administration of justice. It *[shall have]* **has** the authority to adopt, alter, amend and repeal bylaws and to adopt new bylaws containing provisions for the regulation and management of the affairs of the state bar not inconsistent with law.

(2)(a)(A) The board *[shall have]* **has** the authority to require all active members of the state bar engaged in the private practice of law whose principal offices are in Oregon to carry professional liability insurance and *[shall be]* **is** empowered, either by itself or in conjunction with other bar organizations, to do whatever is necessary and convenient to implement this provision, including the authority to own, organize and sponsor any insurance organization authorized under the laws of the State of Oregon and to establish a lawyer's professional liability fund. This fund shall pay, on behalf of active members of the state bar engaged in the private practice of law whose principal offices are in Oregon, all sums as may be provided under such plan which any such member shall become legally obligated to pay as money damages because of any claim made against such member as a result of any act or omission of such member in rendering or failing to render professional services for others in the member's capacity as an attorney or caused by any other person for whose acts or omissions the member is legally responsible.

(B) The board *[shall have]* **has** the authority to assess each active member of the state bar engaged in the private practice of law whose principal office is in Oregon for contributions to *[such]* **the professional liability fund[,] and to establish the date by which contributions must be made.**

(C) **The board has the authority** to establish definitions of coverage to be provided by *[such]* **the professional liability** fund and to retain or employ legal counsel to represent *[such]* **the** fund and defend and control the defense against any covered claim made against *[such]* **the** member.

(D) The board *[shall have]* **has** the *[further]* authority to offer optional professional liability coverage on an underwritten basis above the minimum required coverage limits provided under *[such]* **the professional liability** fund, either through *[such]* **the** fund, through a separate fund or through any insurance organization authorized under the laws of

the State of Oregon, and may do whatever is necessary and convenient to implement this provision. Any fund so established shall not be subject to the Insurance Code of the State of Oregon.

(E) Records of a claim against the **professional liability** fund are exempt from disclosure under ORS 192.410 to 192.505.

(b) For purposes of paragraph (a) of this subsection, an attorney is not engaged in the private practice of law if the attorney is a full-time employee of a corporation other than a corporation incorporated under ORS chapter 58, the state, an agency or department thereof, a county, city, special district or any other public or municipal corporation or any instrumentality thereof. However, an attorney who practices law outside of the attorney's full-time employment is engaged in the private practice of law.

(c) For the purposes of paragraph (a) of this subsection, the principal office of an attorney is considered to be the location where the attorney engages in the private practice of law more than 50 percent of the time engaged in that practice. In the case of an attorney in a branch office outside Oregon and the main office to which the branch office is connected is in Oregon, the principal office of the attorney is not considered to be in Oregon unless the attorney engages in the private practice of law in Oregon more than 50 percent of the time engaged in the private practice of law.

(3) The board may appoint such committees, officers and employees as it deems necessary or proper and fix and pay their compensation and necessary expenses. At any meeting of the board, two-thirds of the total number of members then in office shall constitute a quorum. It shall promote and encourage voluntary county or other local bar associations.

(4) Except as provided in this subsection, an employee of the state bar shall not be considered an "employee" as the term is defined in the public employees' retirement laws. However, an employee of the state bar may, at the option of the employee, for the purpose of becoming a member of the Public Employees Retirement System, be considered an "employee" as the term is defined in the public employees' retirement laws. The option, once exercised by written notification directed to the Public Employees Retirement Board, may not be revoked subsequently, except as may otherwise be provided by law. Upon receipt of such notification by the Public Employees Retirement Board, an employee of the state bar who would otherwise, but for the exemption provided in this subsection, be considered an "employee," as the term is defined in the public employees' retirement laws, shall be so considered. The state bar and its employees shall be exempt from the provisions of the State Personnel Relations Law. No member of the state bar shall be considered an "employee" as the term is defined in the public employees' retirement laws, the unemployment compensation laws and the State Personnel Relations Law solely by reason of membership in the state bar.

SECTION 5. ORS 9.200 is amended to read:

9.200. (1) Any member in default in payment of membership fees established under ORS 9.191 (1) [*for a period of 30 days, or any person in default in payment of membership fees established under ORS 9.191 (2) for a period of 30 days after admission or as otherwise provided by the board,*] or any member in default in payment of assessed contributions to a professional liability fund **established** under ORS 9.080 (2) [*for a period of 30 days, shall, after 60 days' written notice of the delinquency, be suspended from membership in the bar*] **shall be given written notice of delinquency and a reasonable time to cure the default.** The executive director of the Oregon State Bar shall send the notice of delinquency to the [*delinquent*] member at the member's electronic mail address on file with the bar on the date of the notice. The executive director shall send the notice by mail to any member who is not required to have an electronic mail address on file with the bar under the rules of procedure. If a [*delinquent*] member fails to pay the fees or contributions within [*60 days after the date of*] **the time allowed to cure the default as stated in the notice,** the member is automatically suspended. The executive director shall provide the names of all members suspended under this section to the State Court Administrator and to each of the judges of the Court of Appeals, circuit and tax courts of the state.

(2) An active member delinquent in the payment of fees or contributions is not entitled to vote.

(3) A member suspended for delinquency under this section may be reinstated only on compliance with the rules of the Supreme Court and the rules of procedure and payment of all required fees or contributions.

BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS

SECTION 6. ORS 9.210 is amended to read:

9.210. (1) The Supreme Court shall appoint [*12 members of the Oregon State Bar to*] a board of bar examiners[. *The Supreme Court shall also appoint two public members to the board who are not active or inactive members of the Oregon State Bar.*] **to carry out the admissions functions of the Oregon State Bar as set forth in the bar bylaws and the rules of the Supreme Court. The composition of the board of bar examiners shall be as provided in the rules of the Supreme Court, but the board must include at least two public members.**

(2) The board shall examine applicants, **investigate applicants' character and fitness** and recommend to the Supreme Court for admission to practice law those who fulfill the requirements prescribed by law and the rules of the Supreme Court.

(3) With the approval of the Supreme Court, the board may fix and collect fees to be paid by applicants for admission, which fees shall be paid into the treasury of the bar.

(4) **Applications for admission and any other material pertaining to individual applicants are**

confidential and may be disclosed only as provided in the rules of the Supreme Court. The board's consideration of an individual applicant's qualifications is a judicial proceeding for purposes of ORS 192.610 to 192.690.

UNIT CAPTIONS

SECTION 7. The unit captions used in this 2015 Act are provided only for the convenience of the reader and do not become part of the

statutory law of this state or express any legislative intent in the enactment of this 2015 Act.

EMERGENCY CLAUSE

SECTION 8. This 2015 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2015 Act takes effect on its passage.

Approved by the Governor May 20, 2015
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