

**VIRGINIA:**

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA  
AT RICHMOND**

**IN THE MATTER OF  
VSB LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY  
TO AMEND VIRGINIA CODE SECTION 54.1-3912 (FEES)**

**(VSB Petition ID: 25-06)**

**PETITION OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR**

K. Brett Marston, President  
Cameron M. Rountree, Executive Director  
Virginia State Bar  
1111 East Main Street, Suite 700  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Phone (804) 775-0560  
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**VIRGINIA:**

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**PETITION**

TO THE HONORABLE CHIEF JUSTICE AND THE JUSTICES OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA:

NOW COMES the Virginia State Bar (“VSB”), by its president and executive director, pursuant to Va. Code §§ 54.1-3910 and Section IV, Part 6, Paragraph 9 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, and requests review and approval of proposed VSB legislative activity (“Legislative Activity”) to support amending the Code of Virginia pertaining to the schedule of fees that the Supreme Court may fix to be paid by members of the Virginia State Bar for the purpose of administering Article 2, (Bar Organization and Government) of Virginia Code Section 54.1-39.12 (Fees), as set forth below. This proposal was approved unanimously by the VSB Council (“Council”) on June 12, 2025. (Appendix, pp. 29-31).

**I. Overview of the Issue**

The proposed VSB Legislative Activity seeks an amendment to allow the Court greater flexibility, pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 11 of the Rules

of the Supreme Court of Virginia, to set the rate of VSB annual dues for lawyers licensed in Virginia. The existing statutory cap was last amended in 1995 and, at that time, *reduced* the amount the Court could fix from \$300 to \$250. This thirty-year old amendment limits the Court's ability to adjust dues to align with contemporary economic conditions and operational requirements. Several reasons support the proposed Legislative Activity to amend the Code.

First, and most importantly, the proposed change seeks to ensure the VSB's financial stability and sustainability, enabling it to better serve Virginia's legal community and the public. Despite cost-savings measures, since 2022 the VSB has utilized accumulated reserve savings to supplement a deficit in operating revenue to sustain status quo operations. Amending the Virginia Code will provide the Court flexibility to ensure the VSB avoids insolvency currently projected to occur in fiscal year 2029.

Second, in part due to the lack of statutory flexibility, VSB dues have not increased since 2000 and, in fact, *decreased* for four years from 2012 through 2015 to account for the financial ramifications of the financial crisis on VSB members. As such, VSB dues rank among the lowest in the nation (6th lowest of 33 unified bars nationwide).

Third, since Virginia Code Section 54.1-39.12 was last amended in 1995, the VSB has improved member services. These include providing the free Malpractice

Avoidance Hotline, free legal research software, free trust accounting and billing software, and access to free training and CLEs. Meanwhile, VSB disciplinary and regulatory functions have increased due to growing numbers of active and associate class members.

Fourth, the VSB has implemented several cost-savings measures. These efforts include reducing VSB staffing (the VSB's greatest expenditure) 24 percent as measured by the staff-to-member ratio compared to 2000, while maximizing other sources of revenue (e.g., increased MCLE sponsor course application fees, restoring fees for delinquent payments to pre-pandemic levels).

Fifth, the VSB has faced inevitable rising costs: Expenses related to staff salaries (primarily imposed by statutory adjustments), technology, inflation, and commercial office rent have significantly increased and have outpaced the VSB's static revenue.

Finally, this request is critical to avoid the continued depletion of reserve savings that have supplemented operating revenue to account for growing, non-discretionary costs. As a non-general fund agency, the VSB must utilize reserves to meet operational expenses as opposed to requesting additional appropriations from the General Assembly.

## **II. Publication and Comments**

On March 3, 2025, the VSB published a request for public comment on its

website. (Appendix, p. 1). Notice of the request was also published in the VSB's March 4, 2025, and April 1, 2025, E-News, (Appendix, p. 3); on the Virginia Lawyers Weekly website on March 7, 2025, (Appendix, p. 4); and in the *Virginia Lawyer Register*, Volume 73, in the April 2025 issue of *Virginia Lawyer* magazine. (Appendix, pp. 7-8). The public comment period was open through May 20, 2025. During the public comment period, 24 comments were received. Four comments were in opposition, 17 commenters and 18 comments were in support, and two comments proposed suggestions but did not take a position on whether the VSB should engage in legislative activity.

Comments opposed were received from Orran L. Brown, Sr. (Appendix, p. 9), Susan Harris (Appendix, p. 10), Ryan Hershey (Appendix, p. 11), and Doug Welty (Appendix, p. 13).

Comments in favor came from: Lily Engle (Appendix, p. 10), Matthew Morrison (Appendix, p. 11), August Bequai (Appendix, p.12), Cullen D. Seltzer (Appendix, p. 14), O. Randolph Rollins (Appendix, p. 15), James (Jay) Speer (Appendix, p. 16), Joseph R. Carico (Appendix, p. 17), Martin Wegbreit (Appendix, p. 18), Lonnie ("Chip") Nunley (Appendix, p. 19), John E. Whitfield (Appendix, p. 20), Lisa Bennett (Appendix, pp. 21-22 ), Tim Freilich (Appendix, p. 23), Clay Warner (Appendix, p. 24), Valerie L'Herrou (Appendix, p. 25), Tara Louise Casey (Appendix, p. 26), David Neumeyer (Appendix, p. 27), and James

McCauley (Appendix, p. 28).

Comments without a position were received from: Jennie Waering (Appendix, p. 12), and Sherry Ramsey (Appendix, p. 13).

### **III. Proposed VSB Legislative Activity**

If approved, VSB volunteer leadership and staff intend to petition members of the General Assembly to amend Virginia Code Section 54.1-39.12 which states, “The Supreme Court may promulgate rules and regulations fixing a schedule of fees to be paid by members of the Virginia State Bar for the purpose of administering this article . . . but the annual fees to be paid by any attorney shall not exceed \$250.”

Recognizing the inter-governmental involvement in this issue, the VSB anticipates Legislative Activity to involve in person meetings between VSB Council members, officers, and staff, on the one hand, and relevant members of the General Assembly, on the other, to explain the need for the amendment, which seeks to increase or eliminate the \$250 statutory limit.

### **IV. Conclusion**

Pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 9 of the Rules of the Court, the VSB respectfully requests approval to engage in legislative activity to request the General Assembly to amend Va. Code § 54.1-39.12 during the 2026 General Assembly Session.

Specifically, the VSB requests approval to propose and support amending Va. Code § 54.1-3912 to remove or, alternatively, to raise the current \$250 statutory maximum for VSB annual dues assessments. The proposed VSB Legislative Activity was developed and approved in compliance with all requirements of Paragraph 9 and adopted by Council by a vote of 61-0, on June 12, 2025. (Appendix, pp. 29-31).

THEREFORE, the VSB requests that the Court approve the proposed VSB Legislative Activity for the reasons stated above.

Respectfully submitted,  
VIRGINIA STATE BAR

By   
K. Brett Marston, President

By   
Cameron M. Rountree, Executive Director

Dated this 24th day of July, 2025.

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AT RICHMOND**

**IN THE MATTER OF  
VSB LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY TO AMEND  
VIRGINIA CODE SECTION 54.1-3912 (FEES)**

**(VSB Petition ID: 25-06)**

**APPENDIX TO THE PETITION OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR**

K. Brett Marston, President  
Cameron M. Rountree, Executive Director  
Virginia State Bar  
1111 East Main Street, Suite 700  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Phone (804) 775-0560  
Fax (804) 775-0501

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# Virginia State Bar

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## Proposed VSB Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912

June 25, 2025

At its meeting on June 12, 2025, the Virginia State Bar Council approved proposed VSB engagement in legislative activity to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 in the 2026 General Assembly Session. A petition will be sent to the Supreme Court of Virginia for approval. The petition will be posted here after it is sent.

## VSB Seeks Public Comment on Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912

March 3, 2025

The Virginia State Bar (VSB) seeks comments on its proposed engagement in legislative activity, pursuant to Part 6, Section V, Paragraph 9 (0) of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 in the 2026 General Assembly Session. The proposed amendment aims to amend the statutory maximum for the annual dues paid to the VSB.

The amendment proposes to allow the Supreme Court of Virginia greater flexibility, pursuant to Part 6, Section V, Paragraph 11 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, to set the rate of the VSB annual dues for lawyers licensed in Virginia. The existing statutory cap was amended in 1995 (from \$300 to \$250) and restricts the Court's ability to adjust dues to align with economic conditions and operational requirements.

Importantly, any change to the statutory cap would *not* result in an automatic dues increase. Any future adjustments to the annual dues would require separate approval from the Court.

The proposed charge seeks to ensure the VSB's financial stability and sustainability, enabling it to better serve Virginia's legal community and the public. The key reasons supporting this amendment includes

1. Flat Dues for 25 Years: Dues have not increased since 2000 (and were decreased for four years from 2012 through 2015), and rank among the lowest state rates (lowest of 33 surveyed bars rates worldwide).
2. Increased Benefits: Over this period, the VSB has enhanced lawyer benefits by introducing the free Malpractice Avoidance Hotline, free legal research software, free trust accounting and billing software, and access to free transcripts and CLEs.
3. Cost-Savings Measures: The VSB has implemented various efficiency measures (e.g., reduced personnel to a 24 percent lower staff-to-member ratio compared to 2000) while maximizing other sources of revenue (e.g., increased MCLE sponsor course application fees).
4. Rising Costs: Expenses related to salaries, technology, inflation, and rent have significantly increased outpacing the VSB's revenue.
5. Financial Viability: Annual dues increase will avoid VSB insolvency by FY 29.

If the General Assembly amends Va. Code § 54.1-3912, the VSB plans to request the Court's approval for an annual dues increase limited to the amount necessary to balance total revenue with necessary expenses. Based on current budget projections, the VSB anticipates requesting an increase of no more than 20 percent to the current \$250 dues assessment.

Comment:

Any residents, business, or other entities may submit written comments in support of or in opposition to the proposed acts or to Cameron Rourtee, Executive Director of the Virginia State Bar, by close of business on May 20, 2025. Comments may be submitted via email to [pubcomment@vsbx.org](mailto:pubcomment@vsbx.org).

Contact (KJMBERS)

All departments (804) 775-0500  
Voice/TTY 711 or (800) 828-1120



Office Hours

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(excluding holidays)  
The Clerk's Office does not accept filings after 4:45pm

Address and Directions

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Richmond, Virginia 23219-0026

RECTIONS

**From:** [Virginia State Bar](#)  
**To:** [Rountree, Cameron](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER March 2025 | VSB News: Council highlights; Dues increase plans; CPF payments; Brown v. Board all star event; So many CLEs, events, and lawyer jobs!  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 12:47:23 PM

Virginia State Bar



## Governance and News

### [Highlights of the March 1 VSB Council Meeting](#)

At its meeting on March 1, 2025, in Richmond, the Virginia State Bar Council heard the following significant reports and took the following actions.

### [VSB Seeks Public Comment on Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912](#)

The VSB seeks comments on its proposed engagement in legislative activity to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 in the 2026 General Assembly Session. The proposed amendment aims to amend the statutory maximum for the annual dues paid to the VSB.

### [VSB Clients' Protection Fund Board Pays \\$266,994 on Eighteen Petitions](#)

Four Virginia attorneys resulted in payments totaling \$266,994 in reimbursements to their former clients.

### [Volunteers still needed for VSB leadership!](#)

K. Brett Marston, president-elect of the VSB, seeks active and in-good-standing Virginia lawyers to serve on a [variety of committees](#) beginning July 1, 2025.

Or, consider serving on a [local disciplinary district committee](#) representing your judicial district in self-regulation. The deadline to apply for committee service is **March 7**.

### [Part 6, § I Regarding Unauthorized Practice Rules](#)

The Virginia State Bar seeks public comment on proposed amendments to Part 6, § I of the Rules of Court, Unauthorized Practice Rules. Comments due **March 7**.

### [Supreme Court of Virginia Restores Delinquency Fees to Pre-Pandemic Levels](#)

Effective March 17, 2025, the Supreme Court of Virginia amended a number of its rules.

### [Appalachian School of Law Suffers Flooding Caused by Heavy Rains](#)

Virginia lawyers are asked to consider donating to Appalachian School of Law and its students after heavy rains caused flooding and losses at the law school in Grundy in mid-February.

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## Compliance

All 2024 MCLE hours must be reported and outstanding MCLE delinquency fees must be paid by **March 17, 2025**, 4:45 pm ET. Failure

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crountree@vsb.org

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Bar seeks comment on proposed amendment to annual dues cap

## Bar seeks comment on proposed amendment to annual dues cap

Jason Boleman (https://valawyerswe...761:ffl:iff...afi\M-seeks comment on proposed amendment to boleman/) // March 7, 2025 /...MI...>ody=The Virginia State Bar has proposed engagement in legislative activity to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912, which governs the statutory cap on annual dues paid to the VSB. According to... You can read the content in details following link https://3A%2F%2Fvalawyersweekly.com%2F2025%2F03%2F07%2Fbar-seeks-comment-on-proposed-amendment-to-annual-dues-cap%2F)

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The Virginia State Bar has proposed engagement in legislative activity to amend **Va. Code § 54.1-3912** (https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title54.1/chapter39/section54.1-3912/}, which governs the statutory cap on annual dues paid to the VSB.

According to a March 3 release from the VSB, the proposed amendment would "allow the Supreme Court of Virginia greater flexibility... to set the rate of the VSB annual dues for lawyers licensed in Virginia."

If the code is amended, the VSB stated it plans to request approval from the Supreme Court of Virginia "for an annual dues increase limited to the amount necessary to balance total revenue with necessary expenses."

"Based on current budget projections, the VSB anticipates requesting an increase of no more than 20 percent to the current \$250 dues assessment," the VSB said in a release. However, the bar stated that a change to the statutory cap would not result in an automatic dues increase, as

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adjustments to the annual dues would require approval from the Supreme Court of Virginia.

The statutory cap on annual dues was last amended in 1995, when the maximum annual dues cap decreased from \$300 to \$250. Per the VSB, annual dues have remained flat since 2000, minus a four-year decrease from 2012 to 2015, and remain among the lowest of the country's unified bars.

But rising costs with salaries and technology, as well as the pressures of inflation, were cited as a reason for the proposed amendment, with the VSB stating that a dues increase will avoid VSB insolvency in the 2029 fiscal year.

"The proposed change seeks to ensure the VSB's financial stability and sustainability, enabling it to better serve Virginia's legal community and the public," the VSB stated via release.

Comments for or against the proposed legislative action can be submitted to VSB Executive Director Camron Rountree at [publiccomment@vsb.org](mailto:publiccomment@vsb.org). Comments must be received by close of business on May 20.

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**Justices clarify deadlines for immigration petitions for review**

U.S. Supreme Court rules a BIA order in withholding-only cases is not a final removal order, impacting deadlin[...]

June 30, 2025

(<https://valawyersweekly.com/2025/06/30/scotus-immigration-bia-filing-deadline/>)

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June 30, 2025

(<https://valawyersweekly.com/2025/06/30/james-walkinshaw-wins-democratic-contest-to-likely-replace-us-rep-connolly-in-northern-virginia/>)

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The president of the University of Virginia, facing heavy pressure from conservative critics and the Trump adm[...]

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(<https://valawyersweekly.com/2025/06/27/justices-revive-death-row-inmates-dna-testing-claims/>)

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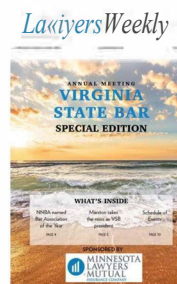
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## NOTICES TO LAWYERS

### The Court of Appeals of Virginia Issues Guide to Assist Self Represented Litigants

The Court of Appeals has issued a “Self-Represented Litigant Guide” to help people who appear before the Court without an attorney to represent them. <https://www.vsb.org/Site/news/news-items/20250307-court-of-appeals-self-litigants.aspx>

### VSB Seeks Public Comment on Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912

The VSB seeks comments on its proposed engagement in legislative activity to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 in the 2026 General Assembly Session. The proposed amendment aims to amend the statutory maximum for the annual dues paid to the VSB. <https://www.vsb.org/Site/news/rules-news/20250303-dues-statutory-max.aspx>

### Appalachian School of Law Suffers Flooding Caused by Weekend Rains

Virginia lawyers are asked to consider donating to Appalachian School of Law and its students after heavy rains caused flooding and losses at the law school in Grundy. <https://www.vsb.org/Site/news/news-items/20250218-appalachian-law-floods.aspx>

### Attention VSB Retired Members:

Beginning with the August 2025 issue, **retired members must opt-in to receive *Virginia Lawyer* magazine by mail.** Respond with your preference to the Virginia State Bar form at <https://forms.office.com/g/wXPMt6M09c> by June 30. *Virginia Lawyer* is also available online. If you have any concern, please email [vsbinfo@vsb.org](mailto:vsbinfo@vsb.org).



### Mandatory Professionalism Course for New VSB Members

By order of the Supreme Court of Virginia, this mandatory course **must be completed within twenty-four months of becoming an active lawyer** in the Virginia State Bar.

Failure to attend this course within twenty-four months of becoming an active lawyer will result in administrative suspension of an attorney’s license, pursuant to Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Part Six, Section IV, Paragraph 19.

Upcoming courses:

April 30	Roanoke, VA
June 12	Virginia Beach, VA
August 14	Fairfax, VA
September 03	Richmond, VA

Course requirements, dates, and registration information:  
<https://bit.ly/professionalismcourse>

### Reminder: Annual Dues Statements are Online Only

Dues statements are no longer mailed. Plan to pay online with a credit card in July 2025. Keep your email current in the member portal at [vsb.org](http://vsb.org) to receive the monthly VSB News email.

### Ethics Questions Answered

The VSB Ethics Hotline is a confidential consultation service for Virginia lawyers. Any Virginia lawyer may seek informal ethics or unauthorized practice of law advice.

Call (804) 775-0564 or visit [www.vsb.org](http://www.vsb.org).

## Public Comments on Proposed Legislative Activity to Amend Va.

This contains all public comments on the VSB's proposed legislative activity to amend Va. Code § 54.10-912. The comments are organized by the date received by the VSB.

---

**From:** [Orran Brown](#)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER FW: Opposition to Request for Amendment to Va Code Section 54.1-3912  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 1:56:22 PM

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I oppose any change to this statute that could lead to higher VSB dues for any Virginia lawyer.

We lawyers in Virginia receive no support or help from the State Bar in any respect. We get nothing back in a positive way for the dues we already are required to pay.

Instead, the VSB treats its lawyers as the enemy. Constant threats about paying dues and having to submit CLE hours. Punishments handed out to lawyers that do nothing to improve their performance or the profession. The CLE requirement is just a racket providing a source of income to CLE providers who charge high rates for useless programs. That requirement merely creates a business market for those sellers.

There can be no justification for the dues we pay, much less any possible increase.

**Orran L. Brown, Sr.**

**BROWNGREER PLC**

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**From:** [Lily Engle](#)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER Bar Dues  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 5:59:01 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001f39f.png](#)

---

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I support the proposed amendment. The benefits our Bar dues provide and the need for more resources by the (very hard working) Bar outweigh any negative effects of an increase in fees, especially when you amortize the annual amount into a monthly cost. Yes, many of us have strained finances, but we probably spend far more than that amount on coffee or lunch out. Thank you.



**Lily Engle**

Assistant Secretary and Deputy General Counsel  
The Conservation Fund  
202.413.6424  
[lengle@conservationfund.org](mailto:lengle@conservationfund.org)

---

**From:** [Susan Harris](#)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 2:26:54 PM

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Hello,

I am against any sort of increase in dues. They are too high as it is and a burden for those who do not work for the government. Thanks. Susan Harris

---

---

**From:** [Ryan S. Hershey](#)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER Do NOT increase bar dues  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 1:01:00 PM

You don't often get email from hershey.ryan@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Many attorneys cannot afford this. This is paramount to extortion to be able to practice our vocation. I strongly object to any increase.

Ryan Hershey  
VSB # 85092

---

**From:** [Matthew Morrison, Esq.](#)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER Public Comment 54.1-3912  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 2:09:33 PM

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Understanding the ever-increasing costs of doing business, I think a modest increase in bar dues is understandable and not unreasonable. I would certainly leave it to the discretion of the SCV to determine the appropriate amount that would promote economic efficiency while still holding some pride that Virginia lawyers are not gouged like other jurisdictions.

I would like to suggest, however, that the VSB consider a dues structure that would allow attorneys to pay multiple years of bar dues at a slightly discounted rate. For example, should dues be raised to \$300/yr, consider allowing attorneys to pay five years of dues at a time for \$1250 instead of \$1500 for all five years. I am confident that many lawyers would choose that option (tax purposes) and the VSB would see increased long-term liquidity.

-M. Morrison  
VSB #89872

---

**From:** [Jennie Waering](#)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER Dues increase  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 1:31:57 PM

You don't often get email from [jwaering1102@gmail.com](mailto:jwaering1102@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

VSB,

I would like to propose that when you look at the fees charged, that you consider reducing fees for those over 65 who are in part time practice and don't fit the inactive category.

I am 70 and wish to keep my license so I can do the occasional pro bono representation as needed in the low income communities that I work with as a social activist. I maintain more CLE than is required. It is a strain to pay the whole fee when there is no income, but you cannot take inactive status and still represent clients, I don't think.

Thank you for your consideration of this idea.

Jennie Waering  
540-314-1157  
[JWaering1102@gmail.com](mailto:JWaering1102@gmail.com)  
Seeking Justice for All  
Living on Tutelo Land

---

**From:** [attvabeg@aol.com](mailto:attvabeg@aol.com)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 5, 2025 11:26:16 PM

I wholeheartedly support the proposal to amend the above. It is unrealistic to assume that a \$250 cap on annual dues serves either the VSB needs or those of the public that we serve. Dues need to be increased in line with the realities of the real world we operate in.

August Bequai, Esq.  
1750 Tysons Blvd., Suite 1500  
McLean, VA 22102  
(T) (703) 893-4806  
(c) (571) 277-5996  
[attvabeg@aol.com](mailto:attvabeg@aol.com)

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**From:** [Sherry Ramsey](#)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 Comment  
**Date:** Thursday, March 6, 2025 11:54:36 AM

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Hello,

I would like to comment on the proposed action to allow an increase to the annual dues. I have never understood why the amount of dues is the same for attorneys who make a great deal of money every year and those who work in public interest jobs, or work part time due to health issues or practice mostly pro-bono work. The ability to keep our license to practice should not be determined by the ability to pay registration fees, which are of course in addition to CLE fees and malpractice insurance.

Especially as we age, we may choose to work only part time or to give back to a community by providing mostly pro bono work to local groups. It seems unfair to charge the same registration fee for attorneys not making much money for whatever reason. The one size fits all attorney is unfair and may in some cases deter attorneys from keeping their license to practice.

Thank you for considering my comments.

*Sherry Ramsey, Esq.*  
 240-401-7361

\*\*\*\*\*

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**From:** [Doug Welty](#)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL SENDER Lobbying for dues increase  
**Date:** Friday, March 7, 2025 2:14:38 PM

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You don't often get email from cdwelty@weltyblair.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi, VSB,

I OPPOSE any expenditure of VSB time or resources on lobbying the General Assembly to increase the bar dues cap. This effort should be left to individual members, if we believe we are being inadequately served.

If resources are becoming an issue, I suggest cutting out the printed glossy Bar magazine and the funds and other resources allocated to Sections for printed newsletters and annual dinners. These should be things of the past. In addition, the Annual Meeting should be self-supported by user fees.

Regards,  
 Doug Welty  
 Member no. 29480

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From: [Seltzer, Cullen D.](#)  
To: [publfcomment](#)  
Subject: EXTERNAL SENDER Public Comment on Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code§ 54.1-3912  
Date: Thursday, March, 13, 2025 4:07:59 PM  
Attachments: [imaaeOOL.m1a](#)

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You don't often get email from [cseltzer@sandsanderson.com](mailto:cseltzer@sandsanderson.com) [Learn why this is important.](#)

Dear Mr. Rountree:

I write in support of VSB engaging in Legislative activity to amend the statutory maximum for dues paid to the VSB.

For 25 years, dues for Bar members have been flat though the demands on the Bar for services to the public and to the lawyers it regulates have grown. The Bar has been a good steward of dues and its reserves but twenty-five years of change in our industry and growing costs have combined to make the dues established long ago inadequate today.

I doubt there are any practitioners in Virginia whose income, expenses, or billing rates have remained flat for twenty-five years. While no one wants or likes dues increases, responsible management of the Bar's affairs requires income commensurate with its obligations. Increasing the statutory cap on dues the Bar can charge members is essential to keeping the Bar as a self-regulating profession and to ensuring the Bar is equipped to protect the public by regulating and supporting members of the Bar.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of any other support in this effort to reset the Bar's financial stability.

Sincerely,

Cullen D. Seltzer

**Cullen D. Seltzer**

*Attorney*



**Sands Anderson PC**

PO Box 1998, Richmond, VA 23218-1998

Direct: [\(804\) 783-7235](tel:(804)783-7235) | Main: [\(804\) 648-1636](tel:(804)648-1636)

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**From:** [attyabeg@aol.com](mailto:attyabeg@aol.com)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXT Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 8:05:40 PM

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The proposal makes sense and I fully support it. I have not witnessed any abuses by the VSB when it comes to the use of membership dues. A raise in dues is needed. Thank you.

August Bequai, Esq.  
McLean, VA 22102  
Tel.: (703) 893-4806  
[attyabeg@aol.com](mailto:attyabeg@aol.com)

---



ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

**O. RANDOLPH ROLLINS, ESQ.**

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804.405.5080 Mobile  
[rrollins@orrllawyer.com](mailto:rrollins@orrllawyer.com)

May 1, 2025

Cameron Rountree  
Executive Director  
Virginia State Bar

[publiccomment@vsb.org](mailto:publiccomment@vsb.org)

**Re: Support for Bar Dues Increase and Amending Va. Code § 54.1-3912**

Virginia State Bar revenues come mainly from member dues, which are \$250 for active members and \$125 for associate members. Even though it is a state agency, it receives no state funds. Dues have not increased in more than 20 years (and in some years, dues were reduced). There is a \$250 statutory cap on annual bar dues.

Bar staff have considered various cost saving measures over several years and concluded that further cuts or personnel reductions would impair the Bar's ability to deliver on its core mission. Without a dues increase and based on current projections, the Bar's reserve (\$6,539,791 at the end of FY 2024) will be sharply reduced and go negative in 2029,

In my opinion, good financial stewardship says the Bar should not be operating at a loss. Further, with bar dues among the lowest in the nation, VSB members enjoying the privilege of practicing law should support a modest dues increase and the necessary amendment to Va.Code 54.1-3912 to remove the statutory cap.

Respectfully submitted,

  
O. Randolph Rollins (VSB 05857)

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**From:** [Jay Speer](#)  
**To:** [publiccomment](#)  
**Subject:** EXT: Comment on Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 13, 2025 9:59:41 AM

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I support the proposed legislative activity to lift the arbitrary limit placed on bar dues 30 years ago. From my many years as a legal services attorney, I know that lawyers must do much more to provide meaningful access to the courts and lawyers. I applaud the VSB efforts to increase access to justice and I know that VSB could do much more with additional funding.



James W. (Jay) Speer  
Executive Director  
Attorney at Law  
Virginia Poverty Law Center  
919 E. Main St., Suite 610  
Richmond, VA 23219  
804-351-5268  
Fax: 804-649-0974  
[www.vplc.org](http://www.vplc.org)

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**From:** Joey Carico <[jcarico@svlas.org](mailto:jcarico@svlas.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 15, 2025 2:01 PM  
**To:** publiccomment <[PublicComment@vsb.org](mailto:PublicComment@vsb.org)>  
**Cc:** Joey Carico <[jcarico@svlas.org](mailto:jcarico@svlas.org)>  
**Subject:** EXT: Public Comment on Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912

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As an attorney who has practiced in Virginia for over 25 years, I consistently support our profession's efforts to expand access to justice for all Virginians.

As a legal aid attorney, I especially support the Virginia State Bar's efforts in this regard with their Access to Legal Services Department. At present, this Department is staffed by only one full-time employee. In order to effectively carry out the mission of broader access to legal services, the VSB needs more funding.

One avenue to increase such funding is through a dues increase. Dues have not been increased in 25 years. Therefore, the ability to implement a dues increase to fund efforts to expand access to legal services is laudable. With more funding, the VSB could expand their *pro bono* efforts and provide more support for our membership. I support increased funding for the VSB and their expanded effort to increase access to legal services for the people of Virginia.



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From: [M. Ivy Wegbreit](#)  
 To: [public comment](#)  
 Subject: EXT: Public Comment on Legislative Activity to Amend Code of Virginia §54.1-3912  
 Date: Thursday, May 15, 2025 2:43:36 PM

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**Caution:** This email originated from outside the VSB. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize and have verified the sender.

Dear Camernn Rountree - Kindly accept this email in strong support of amending Code of Virginia §54.1-3912 to allow an increase in the statutory maximum Bar dues, currently set at \$2:50 since the year 1995.

I am the retired Director of Litigation from Central Virginia Legal Aid Society, a member of the Virginia State Bar (VSB) for 44 years and still an active member as an Emeritus *Pro Bono* Attorney. My service to the VSB has included six years on the Third District, Section II Disciplinary Committee (2005 - 2011) six years on the Standing Committee on Access to Legal Services (2017- 2023) and current service on the Bond of Government of the Senior Lawyers Conference (2024 - ).

The case for raising a modest (20%) increase in Bar dues is compelling and overwhelming. VSB dues have not been increased in 30 years and are the sixth lowest in the country. During that same time period, the Consumer Price Index has more than doubled. This drives up the cost of salaries, benefits, equipment, technology, supplies and rent.

In addition, due to the added and necessary work taken on by the VSB, including but not limited to - access to free trainings and continuing legal education, FastCase, Malpractice Avoidance Hotline, *Pro Bono* voluntary reporting Professionalism Committee, Financial Accounting and Billing software, and Virginia Free Legal Answers - VSB's expenses now exceed revenue.

While drawing down reserves over the next three fiscal years, the VSB faces insolvency by FY 2029. In that event, VSB functions would be limited to regulation and discipline. Everything else would be sacrificed, including access to legal services.

Access to legal services for low-income people has not changed appreciably during my entire 43 year legal aid career in Virginia. Around 275 legal aid attorneys are available to serve the legal needs of 1.1 million low-income Virginians eligible for their assistance (about 1 legal aid attorney for every 4,000 poor people). Around 32,000 other attorneys are available to serve the legal needs of the other 7.7 million non-poor Virginians (about 1 attorney for every 240 non-poor-people). Even if we assume there are only 11,000 non- corporate, non-government attorneys to serve those 1.1 million non-poor Virginians, that still is about 1 attorney for every 700 non-poor people).

In short, a non-poor Virginian is about six times more likely to have an attorney than a poor Virginian. Access to Justice tries to remedy this inequity. Without an increase in Bar dues, the final six words of the Pledge of Allegiance - "with liberty and justice for all" - will remain a cruel mockery.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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**From:** Nunley, Chip <[cnunley@hunton.com](mailto:cnunley@hunton.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, May 15, 2025 6:05 PM

**To:** publiccomment <[PublicComment@vsb.org](mailto:PublicComment@vsb.org)>

**Subject:** EXT: Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code §

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To the Virginia State Bar,

I am in favor of the proposed legislative activity to amend Virginia Code 54.1 – 3912.

In my opinion, the Bar has done a commendable job of administering the disciplinary system and providing services to a growing Virginia lawyer population. Bar dues have not increased for 25 years, although the cost of rent, office equipment, supplies and labor surely have. We are very fortunate as Virginia lawyers to be self-governing and with that comes the responsibility to properly administer ourselves. The relatively small increase in dues, the first in 25 years, is a necessary step to see that the Bar can continue to properly carry out its mission. Personally, I also hope that some of the proposed dues increase can be used to support efforts of the Bar to increase the access to legal services for all Virginians, whether they be compensated services or pro bono services.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Chip Nunley

**HUNTON**  
ANDREWS KURTH

**Lonnie Nunley**  
Partner  
[cnunley@HuntonAK.com](mailto:cnunley@HuntonAK.com)  
p 804.788.8679  
[bio](#) | [vCard](#)

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**From:** John Whitfield <jwhitfield@brls.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 16, 2025 2:57 PM  
**To:** publiccomment <PublicComment@vsb.org>  
**Subject:** EXT: Comments re Proposed Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912

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On behalf of Blue Ridge Legal Services, the legal aid society that serves the Shenandoah and Roanoke Valleys of Virginia, I write to register our support for the Virginia State Bar's proposal to seek the lifting of the existing statutory limitation on the amount the VSB can levy annual for membership bar dues. The VSB has not increased its bar dues in a quarter century, and this statutory cap prevents the VSB from seeking any increase, no matter how necessary it may be to achieving the VSB's mission.

If the VSB is to effectively accomplish its four-pronged mission of (1) protecting the public; (2) regulating the legal profession in Virginia; (3) advancing access to legal services; and (4) assisting in improving the legal profession and the judicial system, it needs to have adequate resources. From legal aid's perspective, we are critically in need of the VSB's active support in promoting access to legal services, particularly in its work promoting increased pro bono participation among its membership. The VSB is uniquely situated to promote pro bono work, yet it lacks the staffing to fully meet its potential for doing so. Adequately funding these activities could make a dramatic difference in our efforts to increase pro bono work participation and access to justice in Virginia.

\$250 in 2000 is equivalent in purchasing power to about \$464.28 today, an increase of \$214.28 over those 25 years. In light of this significant diminution in buying power, it is no surprise that the VSB is now financially strapped and unable to perform all of its functions effectively. For this reason, it seems abundantly clear that the current statutory cap of \$250 in annual bar dues urgently needs to be lifted, and I strongly support the Bar's proposal to pursue this in the Virginia General Assembly.

Thank you for considering these views.

With kind regards,

**John E. Whitfield**  
Executive Director/General Counsel



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Harrisonburg, VA 22803  
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Lisa A. Bennett, Attorney Director of Pro Bono & Triage Programs

TO: Cameron Rountree, VSB Executive Director, [publiccomment@vsb.org](mailto:publiccomment@vsb.org)  
 FROM: Ilisa A. Bennett, Director of Pro Bono, Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS)  
 RE: Public Comment on Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912  
 DATE: May 11, 2025

Thank you for the invitation to submit public comment. As a recipient of federal funding, Central Virginia Legal Aid's staff provides public comment in accordance with 45 C.F.R. § 1612.6 and only in compelling circumstances and where such comments comport with and further CVLAS's mission to provide free civil legal services to low-income individuals. In my capacity as CVLAS's Director of Pro Bono and as a legal aid lawyer with thirty-five (35) years of experience, these comments are submitted in support of the proposal to amend Code of Virginia § 54.1-3912 to allow the first increase in the maximum for annual dues (currently \$250) paid to the Virginia State Bar (VSB) in thirty (30) years.

The VSB has not had a dues increase in 25 years. Since then, the mission of the VSB has added a third and fourth prong to: (3) advance access to legal services, and (4) assist in improving the legal profession and the judicial system. These missions—especially advancing access to legal services—cannot be sustained in light of the resource constraints imposed by the outdated statute setting maximum bar dues.

The Access to Legal Services Committee was only recently made a standing committee (which is permanent), as opposed to a special committee (which can be temporary). Excluding the Virginia lawyer Referral Service, the VSB Access to Legal Services Department is staffed by only one full-time employee, orris Gann. She is supported only part-time by an administrative assistant who is shared with two other departments.

Ms. Gantz continuously operates at full capacity even as the demand for her work continues to grow. Among other tasks, she compiles information from the annual voluntary *Pro Bono* reporting in effect since 2019, facilitates quarterly meetings of the Access to Legal Services Committee, provides services needed for the four annual *Pro Bono* awards, and administers Virginia Free Legal Answers (often answering questions of an urgent nature or which go unanswered by volunteers for long periods of time). Ms. Gantz convenes a Pro Bono consortium comprised of qualified legal service providers and law schools to further best practice in Virginia.

Due to limited staffing and funding, the VSB has reluctantly curtailed member service and programs. Recently, the VSB had to decline the opportunity to administer the Supreme Court of Virginia's Access to Justice Commission's proposed statewide *pro bono* portal system (Paladin) despite strong interest, because of financial and staffing limitations.

The VSA wants to expand *pro bono* efforts, support members, and administer Paladin, none of which are possible without removing the statutory cap on dues. Virginia is poised to make meaningful gains in closing the justice gap through its Pro Bono Virginia campaign. Without a dues increase, the VSB will be unable to staff the Access to Legal Services Department at a meaningful level. The situation is

J01 West Broad Street Suite 101, Richmond VA 23220  
 Direct: (804) 200-6038 Fax: (804) 649-8794  
[Lisa@cvlas.org](mailto:Lisa@cvlas.org)

Comments continued on the next page.  
 Request for Legislative Action

*Continued from the previous page.*

approaching a crisis. For the next three fiscal years, the VSB will be drawing down its reserve funds and will be insolvent by FY 2029 without an increase in member dues.

If that were to occur, the VSB would have to eliminate most functions not involving regulation and discipline, and potentially lay off more than 10% of staff. If the statutory maximum is lifted, the VSB would request that the Supreme Court approve a dues increase of no more than 20% – an increase of \$50. This would make dues equal to the \$300 statutory maximum in effect in 1995. For all these reasons, the increase in the statutory maximum should be approved.

Sincerely,  
  
Lisa A. Bennett



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**L S C V**

**Legal Services Corporation of Virginia**

May 19, 2025

Cameron M. Rountree, Executive Director  
Virginia State Bar  
1111 East Main Street, Suite 700  
Richmond, VA 23219-0026

BY EMAIL ONLY TO: [publiccomment@vsb.org](mailto:publiccomment@vsb.org)

Re: Proposed engagement m. legislative activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912

Dear Cameron:

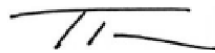
I am writing as Executive Director of the Legal Services Corporation of Virginia (LSCV) to support the proposal of the Virginia State Bar (VSB) to engage in legislative activity to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 during the 2026 General Assembly Session. This amendment would give the Supreme Court of Virginia greater flexibility to set the rate for annual bar dues for Virginia lawyers and ensure that the VSB has the resources needed to continue to support members of the Bar efficiently and effectively. In addition to supporting Bar members, an adequately funded VSB is also critical to helping LSCV fulfill our core mission.

As you know, LSCV works to develop, fund, coordinate, and oversee the delivery of civil legal services to people living in poverty throughout Virginia. Our ten legal aid programs closed 26,700 cases last year, benefiting more than 73,000 Virginians. We couldn't do our work as effectively without the close partnership of the VSB. In the past year alone, we have worked with your talented staff to streamline administration of Virginia's Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Program, to explore ways to boost pro bono awareness and contributions, and to identify and address issues impacting access to legal services for low-income Virginians. The work of LSCV and our programs is greatly enhanced through our partnership with the VSB, and we have seen firsthand the efficiency, expertise, and dedication of your team.

But the rule of law and access to legal services in Virginia **will** only be as strong as the Bar that regulates our profession. An increase in Bar dues is long overdue- and for these reasons LSCV supports the VSB's proposed efforts.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



Tim Freilich, Executive Director  
Legal Services Corporation of Virginia

---

From: Clay Warner <[CWarner@justice4all.org](mailto:CWarner@justice4all.org)>  
 Sent: Monday, May 19, 2025 3:55 PM  
 To: publiccomment <[PublicComment@vsb.org](mailto:PublicComment@vsb.org)>  
 Subject: EXT: Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 - Comments of Legal Aid Justice Center

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**Caution:** This email originated from outside the VSB. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize and have verified the sender.

The Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC) supports an increase in member dues payable to the Virginia State Bar (VSB). We also support VSB's efforts to draw attention to its dire financial situation, and we support its efforts to modify Va. Code § 54.1-3912 to raise the cap on VSB member dues.

LAJC is "legal aid society" providing legal services to Virginians who are "unable to pay for" such services, as described in 15 VAC 5-10-10.

VSB member dues—which provide nearly all of VSB's funding—have not increased in twenty-five years. We do not know how VSB has successfully maintained its core functions (regulation of lawyer ethical behavior, and tracking mandatory continuing legal education) over that period in the absence of a dues increase. Basic expenses like salaries, rent, and the cost of technology have all increased significantly during that time.

But during that time VSB's mission has also expanded to include something of special interest to LAJC: it has been charged to "advance access to legal services." That task sorely needs attention. According to a recent report commissioned by the Legal Services Corporation:

75% of low-income households in the South experienced at least one civil legal problem in the past year—and many of these problems (threats of eviction, for example) have a substantial impact on people's lives.

92% of those with difficult legal problems do not get any or enough legal help for the problems that had a substantial impact on them.

- 49% of requests for legal assistance must be turned down by legal aid organizations because of limited resources.

VSB has plans to help close that "justice gap"—notably through the use of a statewide internet portal for pro bono services. But it has been unable to implement those plans because of limited funding. If dues are not increased, VSB will be forced to abandon that part of its mission.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Clay Warner**

General Counsel  
 Legal Aid Justice Center  
 64102 Arlington Blvd., Suite 1130  
 Falls Church, VA 22042  
 (703) 282-4067  
[cwarner@justice4all.org](mailto:cwarner@justice4all.org)

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From: Valerie L'Herrou <[valerie@vplc.org](mailto:valerie@vplc.org)>  
 Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2025 4:49 PM  
 To: publiccomment <[PublicComment@vsb.org](mailto:PublicComment@vsb.org)>  
 Cc: Faith Kallman <[Faiht@vplc.org](mailto:Faiht@vplc.org)>  
 Subject: EXT: Publiccomment reLegislativeActivityto AmendVa.Code§54.1-3912

**Caution:** This email originated from outside the VSB. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize and have verified the sender.

Public Comments from Virginia Poverty Law Center Regarding Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912

Virginia Poverty Law Center supports expanding the State Bar's capacity to increase its programs to expand access to legal services.

The VSB's Access to Legal Services Committee has been a driver behind Virginia's push to improve access to justice, an issue that has become more emergent in the wake of the pandemic, and studies showing that access to justice and legal services in Virginia are lacking. The National Center for Access to Justice gives Virginia a score of 30.30; we are ranked 19th out of 50 states; Richmond remains ranked highest in the country for rate of eviction filings,

While increasing pro bono programs will not be enough to meaningfully expand access to legal services, it is nonetheless important. Virginia Poverty Law Center recently learned that the VSB has had to decline the opportunity to administer a statewide pro bono program proposed by the Supreme Court of Virginia's Access to Justice Commission not because of a lack of support for the proposal, but due to financial concerns and lack of staff capacity.

We understand that the VSB is seeking to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 to lift the \$250 cap on state bar membership dues.

Even beyond improving access to justice—an important aspect of the state bar's mission—projections show that the VSB will be insolvent by 2030-2031 under current budgeting. This will create a state of crisis for the state bar's ability to regulate the legal profession.

We support, therefore, enabling the VSB to seek legislative access to lift the cap on membership dues. The last action taken by the legislature in regard to membership dues was thirty years ago: reducing the dues cap from \$300 to \$250.

If adjusted to the recurrent rate of inflation, the dues cap should be \$525 today. While we would prefer a tiered dues rate, for new attorneys and those working in the public interest sector, it seems well past time to revisit the matter of the membership dues cap, both for the sake of professional regulation and for ensuring that access to justice can be meaningfully supported.

Thank you

On behalf of Virginia Poverty Law Center

Valerie L'Herrou

*Deputy Director, Center for Family Advocacy*

 **VPLC** |  Poverty Virginia  
 Poverty Law Center

919 East Main Street, Suite 610 • Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.vplc.org](http://www.vplc.org)

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\* Received after the close of the Public Comment Period:

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**From:** Casey, Tara <[tcasey@richmond.edu](mailto:tcasey@richmond.edu)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 21, 2025 12:36 PM  
**To:** publiccomment <[PublicComment@vsb.org](mailto:PublicComment@vsb.org)>  
**Subject:** EXT: Dues increase will improve access to justice

You don't often get email from [tcasey@richmond.edu](mailto:tcasey@richmond.edu). [Learn why this is important](#)

**Caution:** This email originated from outside the VSB. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize and have verified the sender.

Dear Friends,

As a longtime, full member of the Virginia State Bar, as well as the Access to Legal Services Committee, I write to express my support of a dues increase for all members.

One core element of the VSB's mission is "to advance access to legal services". I was heartened with the Access to Legal Services Committee became a standing committee, which solidified the importance of this prong in the operations of the VSB. Access to Legal Services is only staffed by one full-time employee, Crista Gantz; Cris has done and continues to do a phenomenal job with limited resources and has truly imprinted the importance of access to justice across the Commonwealth.

However, to expand pro bono efforts and support VSB members, more resources are needed. Therefore, I support removal of the statutory cap on dues, which requires legislative action to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912.

Stay gold,

*Tara Louise Casey*  
Professor of Law, Legal Practice  
Director, Carrico Center for Pro Bono & Public Service  
Director, Bridge to Practice Fellowship Program  
University of Richmond School of Law  
*Pronouns: She/Her ([What does this mean?](#))*

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\* Received after the close of the Public Comment Period:



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May 22, 2025

By Email

Cameron Rountree  
Virginia State Bar  
111 East Main Street, Suite 700  
Richmond, Virginia 23219-0026

Re: Proposed Legislative Action to Lift the VSB's \$250 Dues Cap

Dear Cameron:

I write as a Virginia attorney, first admitted in 1985, as the executive director of Virginia Legal Aid Society since 1990, and as former and current member of several VSB committees that rely heavily on support by the VSB staff, the current committee being the Study Committee on Entry, Growth, and Distribution of Virginia Attorneys.

The EGAD-VA Committee is studying and will report this coming fall on growing challenges that are fundamental to the administration of justice and mission of the bar, namely the availability of legal services to ALL Virginians regardless of location, income, or other factors that may affect their access to legal help. The committee has consumed large amounts of my time since March 2024 and will continue to do so for most of this calendar year, but the burden on me has been small compared to the massive amounts of time and labor required for our staff director, Crista Gantz, as she collects, analyzes, and prepares for use spoken, textual, and numerical information from multiple scores of sources for use by our committee and ultimately by Bar Council. This work is crucial to our committee as we determine the extent, impact, and most promising solutions for the expanding number of Virginians who have no access to legal help when they need it now and will have less access in the future.

Crista is of course also staff director of the Access to Legal Services Committee, which has myriad responsibilities, and for administrative support shares one assistant with two other VSB departments. She needs more support now and will need more in the future as new needs for her time develop. I therefore strongly support the removal of the legislative cap on dues so that the bar can more meaningfully respond to staffing needs without the artificial barrier of a dues cap imposed 25 years ago.

Sincerely,

David B. Neumeyer



Offices in: Danville, Martinsville, Farmville, Lynchburg and Suffolk • Outreach Center in South Hill  
Free legal advice and information at 1-866-LegalAid (534-5243) and legal information at [www.VLAS.org](http://www.VLAS.org) and [www.VaLegalAid.org](http://www.VaLegalAid.org)  
Central Virginia, Danville-Pittsylvania County, Franklin-Southampton, Henry County & Martinsville, South Hampton Roads  
and Prince Edward United Way member agency

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\* Received after the close of the Public Comment Period:

**From:** [j.mccauley53@gmail.com](mailto:j.mccauley53@gmail.com) <[j.mccauley53@gmail.com](mailto:j.mccauley53@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 22, 2025 1:14 PM  
**To:** publiccomment <[PublicComment@vsb.org](mailto:PublicComment@vsb.org)>; Rountree, Cameron <[CRountree@vsb.org](mailto:CRountree@vsb.org)>  
**Subject:** EXT: Public Comment on Conversion of VSB Conferences to Sections

**Caution:** This email originated from outside the VSB. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize and have verified the sender.

Dear Cameron,

On May 12, 2025, the VSB gave notice and invited comment on proposed changes to the Bylaws of the Virginia State Bar and Council (Bylaws). While the posting notes that the changes to the Bylaws are *proposed*, given that the Supreme Court entered the Order on April 16, 2025, to make the conversion of the 4 Conferences to Sections no later than June 30, 2025, I don't see or understand what is left for me to comment about! The deed has been done.

I understand that the reason given for making this significant change is that "the Court has determined it is in the finance interests of the Virginia State Bar that its four conferences . . . be converted to sections." Presumably, this means that the VSB will now be able to charge members of these 4 conferences "section dues," and perhaps require that they pay for the expenses of their projects and programs out of a section budget, not the general budget.

I am sympathetic to the VSB's financial situation and its intent to garner support to introduce a bill to have the General Assembly lift the statutory cap on annual dues. I support that initiative and believe that an increase in annual dues has become necessary as the VSB has depleted its reserve to pay for operating expenses that have risen over several years. The VSB needs to increase its revenue to meet the expenses of its operations.

What I do not support and oppose is the conversion of the conferences to sections. To me, the work and progress of the Conferences has always been broader and more reaching than any of the sections of the VSB. The scope of work and outreach of the four conferences extends well beyond serving its members but rather focuses on serving the needs of the public and legal community at large. I cannot say that about the work of the sections which tend more to serve their respective members' interests, which is OK. But my point is that the four conferences are by no means comparable to the sections and should not be treated as such.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this rule change.

Respectfully,  
Jim

<p><b>James Michael McCauley</b> Law Office of James M. McCauley  (804) 332-1305 Work <a href="mailto:j.mccauley53@gmail.com">j.mccauley53@gmail.com</a>  17 Bridgehampton Place Richmond, Virginia 23229 Ethics/Prof. Responsibility</p>	
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**Virginia State Bar**  
1111 E. Main Street, Suite 700  
Richmond, Virginia 24219-0026  
Telephone: (804) 775-0500

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## **MINUTES OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**Date: June 12, 2025, 9:15 a.m.**

**Location: Hilton Oceanfront, 3001 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach**

The VSB Council met on Thursday, June 12, 2025. At 9:15 a.m., President Michael M. York called the meeting to order. Sixty-four (64) committee members attended in-person, satisfying the meeting quorum requirement in Part I, Art. V, Sec. 2 of the Bylaws of the Virginia State Bar (VSB). There was no remote participation.

### **B. Approval of Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code Sec. 54.1-3912**

Michael York presented a request for approval of legislative activity. A copy of the memo dated June 11, 2025, re: Request for Approval to Engage in Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 in the 2026 General Assembly Session was included in the materials provided to Council.

After a discussion, a motion was made by Susan Tarley and seconded by Debra Powers to vote to approve the request to engage in legislative activity to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 in the 2026 General Assembly Session and to petition the Supreme Court for approval.

The motion passed, and Council approved the request to engage in legislative activity to amend Va. Code § 54.1-3912 in the 2026 General Assembly Session and to petition the Supreme Court for approval. Member Gifford Hampshire voted "yes" verbally. All other members voted using the Poll Everywhere voting tool. The electronic voting results are appended to these minutes.

**B: Do you approve of the Legislative Activity to Amend Va. Code Sec. 54. 1-3912?****Results Summary**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Yes</b>	60
<b>No</b>	0
<b>Abstain</b>	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

<b>Count</b>	<b>Started At (CDT)</b>	<b>Screen Name</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	6/12/2025 9:46	David sher	Yes
2	6/12/2025 9:47	Marie Washington	Yes
3	6/12/2025 9:46	Daniel P. Frankl	Yes
4	6/12/2025 9:46	Bob Walker	Yes
5	6/12/2025 9:46	Tom Bell	Yes
6	6/12/2025 9:46	Matt Foster	Yes
7	6/12/2025 9:46	Randy Rollins	Yes
8	6/12/2025 9:46	Debra Powers	Yes
9	6/12/2025 9:46	K Dickerson	Yes
10	6/12/2025 9:46	Sean Dolan	Yes
11	6/12/2025 9:46	Zaida C Thompson	Yes
12	6/12/2025 9:46	Adrienne George-Eliades	Yes
13	6/12/2025 9:46	Kyle Elliott	Yes
14	6/12/2025 9:46	Luis Perez	Yes
15	6/12/2025 9:47	Dale Pittman	Yes
16	6/12/2025 9:46	Ann Marie Park	Yes
17	6/12/2025 9:46	Richard Howard-Smith	Yes
18	6/12/2025 9:46	Paul Melnick	Yes
19	6/12/2025 9:46	Lisa Wilson	Yes
20	6/12/2025 9:46	CaroleHC	Yes
21	6/12/2025 9:46	Patrick C. Murphrey	Yes
22	6/12/2025 9:46	Alison Mullins	Yes
23	6/12/2025 9:46	Peter McDermott	Yes
24	6/12/2025 9:46	E M Wright Jr	Yes
25	6/12/2025 9:47	Tamika Jones	Yes
26	6/12/2025 9:46	Chidinma U. Harley	Yes
27	6/12/2025 9:46	W. Huntington Byrnes	Yes
28	6/12/2025 9:46	Sebastian Norton	Yes
29	6/12/2025 9:46	Benjamin A. Shute	Yes
30	6/12/2025 9:46	Joel McClellan	Yes
31	6/12/2025 9:46	Allen Bareford	Yes
32	6/12/2025 9:46	David Hagan	Yes
33	6/12/2025 9:46	Derek Davis	Yes

<b>Count</b>	<b>Started At (CDT)</b>	<b>Screen Name</b>	<b>Response</b>
34	6/12/2025 9:46	DJ Hansen	Yes

35	6/12/2025 9:46	Juli Porto	Yes
36	6/12/2025 9:46	Gobind Sethi	Yes
37	6/12/2025 9:46	Susan Butler	Yes
38	6/12/2025 9:46	Cullen Seltzer	Yes
39	6/12/2025 9:46	Craig E. Ellis	Yes
40	6/12/2025 9:46	Hope Townes	Yes
41	6/12/2025 9:46	Chidi James	Yes
42	6/12/2025 9:46	Susan Tarley	Yes
43	6/12/2025 9:46	Lonnie D Nunley, III	Yes
44	6/12/2025 9:46	Brett Marston	Yes
45	6/12/2025 9:46	Adam Krischer	Yes
46	6/12/2025 9:46	Naveed Kalantar	Yes
47	6/12/2025 9:46	Christine Mougín-Boal	Yes
48	6/12/2025 9:46	Penn Bain	Yes
49	6/12/2025 9:46	Will Egen	Yes
50	6/12/2025 9:46	Jonathan Petty	Yes
51	6/12/2025 9:46	Joanna Suyes	Yes
52	6/12/2025 9:47	Jim Hundley	Yes
53	6/12/2025 9:46	Veronica Meade	Yes
54	6/12/2025 9:46	Molly Newton	Yes
55	6/12/2025 9:47	Nicole Upshur	Yes
56	6/12/2025 9:46	Rex Flynn	Yes
57	6/12/2025 9:47	Bretta lewis	Yes
58	6/12/2025 9:46	Jeremiah Denton	Yes
59	6/12/2025 9:46	Stephanie Grana	Yes
60	6/12/2025 9:47	Bruce Russell	Yes