

Virginia Bar Association
Old Dominion Bar Association
**Northern Virginia Black Attorneys
Association**
Virginia Women Attorneys Association

Virginia Trial Lawyers Association
Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys
Hispanic Bar Association of Virginia
Asian Pacific American Bar Association

August 10, 2020

Karen Gould, Esq
Virginia State Bar Executive Director
1111 E Main St, #700
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Elimination of Bias CLE Proposal

Dear Ms. Gould:

We write in support of the VSB Diversity Conference proposal to specifically list elimination of bias training as an approved form of Ethics CLE for VSB members. We, as a country, are coming to grips with the long-lasting effects of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and institutionalized racism like never before. We have an unprecedented opportunity to take steps to make our legal community more welcoming and the legal system more equitable.

We believe that if we can better understand ourselves, and how our backgrounds and experiences shape the way we see, hear and treat others, we can improve both our civil and criminal justice systems. That is why it is essential that we increase the availability of elimination of bias training and encourage more lawyers and judges to participate in these trainings by making elimination of bias an approved MCLE topic.

Earlier this year the VSB Diversity conference proposed an amendment to *Part 6, Section IV, of the Rules of Supreme Court of Virginia, Paragraph 17 (C)*, which provides that all members of the Virginia State Bar shall annually complete and certify attendance at a minimum of 12 hours of approved CLE courses, at least two hours of which shall be in the area of legal ethics or professionalism. The proposal would add the topic of elimination of bias to that section, so the newly amended section would read as follows:

*(1) All active members of the Virginia State Bar shall annually complete and certify attendance at a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours of approved Continuing Legal Education courses of which at least two (2) hours shall be in the area of legal ethics, ~~or~~ professionalism or **elimination of bias**,.....*

For consistency, a change to paragraph (2) would read:

(2) In order to provide flexibility in fulfilling the annual requirement, a one year carryover of credit hours is permitted, so that accrued credit hours in excess of one year's requirement may be carried forward from one year to meet the requirement for the next year. A member may carry forward a maximum of twelve (12) credit hours, two (2) of which, if earned in legal ethics ~~or professionalism~~ or elimination of bias, may be counted toward the two (2) hours required in legal ethics ~~or professionalism~~ or elimination of bias.

The final proposed change would be to the definitions to add a subparagraph (x), which would read:

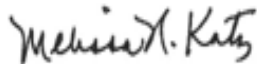
(x) "elimination of bias" training shall mean a training that relates to bias based on race, gender, economic status, creed, color, religion, national origin, disability, age or sexual orientation in the legal profession or in the law. To be eligible for elimination of bias CLE credit, a program must address diversity, cultural competence, or bias issues in the legal profession or in the law.

We truly believe that adoption of this proposal would be a step in the right direction and would benefit both the members of the Virginia State Bar and the public that we serve.

Sincerely,



Elliott M. Buckner, President
VIRGINIA TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION



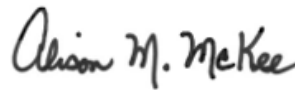
Melissa Hogue Katz, President
VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF DEFENSE ATTORNEYS



Vernida R. Chaney, President
NORTHERN VIRGINIA BLACK ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION



Fernando Villarroel, President
HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA



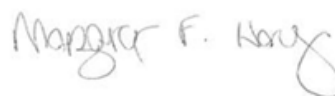
Alison M. McKee, President
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