

Foster, Denise

From: Nicholas Stampfli [gr8nicko@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 2:09 PM
To: Foster, Denise
Subject: Comment on proposed changes to GR 12.1

I object to the proposed changes to GR 12.1(b)(22). The current language of the rule is adequate and allows the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) to collect and distribute funds. The proposed language is unnecessary because the state constitution already gives the Supreme Court oversight of the bar, its functions, and its decisions.

The proposed rule appears to be an attempt by WSBA leadership to circumvent votes by its membership taken in accordance with democratic principles. To the extent that is true, as a Washington State Voter and WSBA member, I am offended.

Since the WSBA is a unified, mandatory bar association, as opposed to a regulatory board of bar overseers found in other states, it should be membership-driven. Since the WSBA regularly takes positions on political issues relating to the administration of justice, WSBA members should be given a greater voice in the association's management, rather than preventing member referenda.

Indeed, a better rule would require a membership vote whenever a fee increase is proposed. This is not unusual in our state, as we regularly hold elections on tax increases, new bonds, and school levies.

Personally, I frequently agree with the positions and programs of the WSBA. Other times, I disagree. However, we cannot continue to have divisive disagreements over the management and regulatory functions of our profession. If we continue, perhaps it is time to reexamine the purpose and structure of the WSBA.

Sincerely,

Nicholas B. Stampfli, Esq.