

Supreme Court of Florida
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1927

July 2, 2003

RE: Petition to amend Rules 2-11.1 and 4-13.2 of the Rules of the Supreme Court relating to admissions to the Bar
Petitioners: The Orange County Bar Association and
Thomas B. Drage, Jr., Esq.
Case No.: SC02-2354

Your Honors,

I am writing to express my support for the Petitioners' petition proposing amendments to Rules 2-11.1 and 4-13.2 of the Rules of the Supreme Court relating to admissions to the Bar.

I have been an Authorized House Counsel under Chapter 17 of the Florida Bar since 1999, bar member number 0168981. While I do not profess to have researched the history of the rules in question, I am confident that I am qualified to comment on the pending petition due to the fact that I currently work with a Barry Law School graduate and due to the fact that my spouse is an Associate Dean at Barry Law School.

Surely the rules were never intended to force an entire graduating class to earn a second J.D. degree because their law school earned accreditation more than 12 months after commencement. As I understand the situation, the ABA modified the accreditation process while Barry's attempt to become accredited was already in progress. No "grandfather clause" or other protection was extended to Barry's then-current students while those modifications were being implemented. Thus, they were excluded from the final accreditation determination due to unavoidable and unreasonable delays imposed by the changing requirements of the ABA. These delays exceeded the 12-month cap within which, originally, the House of Delegates would normally have approved accreditation.

Additionally, the very modifications imposed by the ABA resulted in a major change to the accreditation process. Instead of the House of Delegates, approval authority now rests with the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, a change that is expected to further delay approval decisions. Please remember that these students were enrolled in the very same educational environment now accredited. Surely they should not be penalized for being in the right place at the wrong time.

The 12-month rule has obviously outlived its usefulness and should be extended to 36 months. This change would prevent students at FAMU and FIU from experiencing the same frustrating fate as Barry's first three graduating classes.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory J. Bendlin, Esq.

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Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been furnished by U.S. Mail to attorney for petitioners, Mathew D. Staver, Esquire, 210 Palmetto Avenue, Longwood, Florida 32750 on this 2nd day of July, 2003.

Name