

July 14, 2003

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

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 & Thomas B. Drage, Jr., Esq.; Case No.: SC02-2354

Dear Your Honors:

The purpose of this letter is to express my support for the above-referenced 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 a member of the Florida Bar since September 22, 1995, and my license number is 0054682.

I have closely followed the *Orlando Sentinel's* reporting of the unfolding events regarding Barry University School of Law's ("Barry") attempt to gain provisional accreditation through the American Bar Association ("ABA"). What began as seemingly reasonable process designed to insure the quality of the academic environment at Barry, instead resulted in students being forced to graduate before the school received provisional accreditation. This Honorable Court permitted many of these students to sit for the July 2000 Florida bar examination. The unfortunate end result, however, is that the bar examination scores remain sealed due to a delay in obtaining provisional accreditation (i.e., their graduation dates falling outside the current 12-month timeframe). At present, many of those same students have had no recourse but to re-enroll at Barry, complete two more years of law school, and receive a second Juris Doctor degree, with the hopes of sitting for and passing the July 2004 Florida Bar examination. The above-described situation has been tragic and heart-wrenching for the students and has cast a dark pall over the legal profession in this state. I trust, however, that the lingering effects of this sad episode may be expeditiously addressed by your Honors.

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I strongly support changing the Bar Admission rules to make them more congruous with the current ABA accreditation process, which can now take up to three (3) years. Furthermore, the current 12-month rule does not bear upon an individual's ability to sit for and possibly pass the Florida bar exam. The educational qualification rule should ensure students receive a quality education; one which provides the analytical and advocacy skills such that when candidates pass the Florida Bar exam, they will be responsible and ethical practitioners. I respectfully request a change in the Rules in accordance with the First proposal.

Sincerely,

Richard Coaxum, Jr., Esquire

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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 ____ day of July, 2003.

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