



A Historic Moment Along **A JOURNEY INCOMPLETE**

WE STAND AT A HISTORIC MOMENT IN TIME.

A woman—a woman of color—has ascended to the highest levels of our federal government.

Four women justices now join five men on the Texas Supreme Court, and four women judges sit with five men on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

El Pasoan Sylvia Borunda Firth will become the first Hispanic woman to serve as president of the State Bar of Texas in June.

And two women—Sara E. Dysart, of San Antonio, and Laura Gibson, of Houston—are campaigning to become the 2021-2022 president-elect of the State Bar.

We have much to celebrate this Women's History Month as we strive to meet the State Bar's mission of promoting diversity in the administration of justice and the practice of law.

The number of women in the legal profession is steadily climbing. The State Bar of Texas annual Attorney Statistical Profile for 2020-2021 shows women account for 37% of all active attorneys in the state, up from 33% a decade ago. These numbers mirror national statistics collected by the American Bar Association.

Further analysis over those 10 years shows the number of Texas women of color also rising, albeit slowly, in the profession. Hispanic or Latina lawyers in particular increased from 9% to 12% of all active women Texas lawyers.

According to the 2019 report *Population Trends of Women in the State Bar of Texas*, women attorneys are projected to make up 39% of the bar's membership by 2024. And women made up 52% of Texas law students enrolled during the 2019-2020 academic year.

But with all these achievements, it's important to note there is still work to be done.

A 2019 report by the ABA and ALM Intelligence—*Walking Out the Door: The Facts, Figures, and Future of Experienced Women Lawyers in Private Practice*—studied why women are far more likely than men to leave the practice of law.

According to the report, women surveyed were more likely to report that factors such as lack of business development opportunities, being denied promotions, and being perceived as less committed to their careers blocked their ability to succeed and advance at their law firms.

The report also showed that law firm leaders and male partners believe their firms are doing well advancing experienced women, while those women disagreed. For example, 84% of senior men thought their firms succeeded in promoting women into leadership, 75% of managing partners agreed, while just 55% of experienced women agreed.

Clearly, we can't dust off our hands and proclaim our work finished.

It's true, we stand at a moment in history when the young girls we are raising to be strong, educated women can see themselves before the court, on the bench, leading the bar, and in the White House. We should all take a moment to honor that.

And then get back to work.

Sincerely,

TREY APFFEL

Executive Director, State Bar of Texas
Editor-in-Chief, *Texas Bar Journal*

Results of the State Bar of Texas Rules Vote 2021

March 4, 2021

Rules Vote Total Results

A. Scope and Objectives of Representation; Clients with Diminished Capacity

	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	17,587	89.74%
No	2,011	10.26%

B. Confidentiality of Information – Exception to Permit Disclosure to Secure Legal Ethics Advice

	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	18,598	94.34%
No	1,116	5.66%

C. Confidentiality of Information – Exception to Permit Disclosure to Prevent Client Death by Suicide

	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	18,041	91.55%
No	1,666	8.45%

D. Conflict of Interest Exceptions for Nonprofit and Limited Pro Bono Legal Services

	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	17,573	89.58%
No	2,045	10.42%

E. Information About Legal Services (Lawyer Advertising and Solicitation)

	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	15,452	78.93%
No	4,125	21.07%

F. Reporting Professional Misconduct and Reciprocal Discipline for Federal Court or Federal Agency Discipline

	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	16,274	83.65%
No	3,180	16.35%

G. Assignment of Judges in Disciplinary Complaints and Related Provisions

	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	16,756	86.36%
No	2,646	13.64%

H. Voluntary Appointment of Custodian Attorney for Cessation of Practice

	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	18,447	93.90%
No	1,198	6.10%