Clerk of Court's statement regarding July bar examination

9 July 2020

Today, Clerk of the Supreme Court of Missouri Betsy AuBuchon issued the following statement:

> The Uniform Bar Examination is scheduled to be administered in Missouri on July 28 and 29. To safeguard the health of examinees, staff, and proctors, the Missouri Board of Law Examiners is implementing the precautionary measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in response to the pandemic. Those measures include additional venues to reduce the number of applicants at each testing site, requiring all attendees wear face masks and maintain adequate social distancing, and responding to requests for accommodations from eligible examinees with compromised immune systems. The Supreme Court of Missouri's order dated April 28, 2020, allowed examinees to delay taking the exam with no postponement fee and extended the temporary certification period under Rule 13 so recent graduates could continue to practice in limited subject matters under close supervision.
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> In taking these steps, the Court and the Board have sought to balance the needs of this year's law school graduates with the ongoing obligation to protect the public and the integrity of the profession through oversight of the profession and its practitioners. The Uniform Bar Exam plays a critical role in that process by ensuring those who are newly licensed have demonstrated they possess the minimal knowledge and skills to perform activities typically required of those entering this profession. The Court and the Board have evaluated various alternatives instead of, or in addition to, the Bar Exam. These include, but have not been limited to, implementing a system of provisional licensure that would allow recent graduates to practice under supervision of a member of the bar but without prior examination. In the end, however, the Court has concluded none of these alternatives adequately ensures the core function of licensure, which is to protect the integrity of the profession and the public from those who have not demonstrated minimum competency to practice law. Even though the pandemic has created unprecedented challenges to this core responsibility of the Court and the Board, as well as unprecedented burdens on those taking the Bar Exam, the Court has determined the process set out in the April 28, 2020, order best balances that long-term responsibility and these short term burdens.

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