

The Supreme Court of Ohio

CASE ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 28, 2020

[Cite as *07/28/2020 Case Announcements #2, 2020-Ohio-3860.*]

MERIT DECISIONS WITHOUT OPINIONS

2020-0829. In re Petition to Amend Rule I of the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio.

Miscellaneous case. On petition concerning the admission to the practice of law. The petition requested the court to do each of the following:

(1) Reconsider its May 14, 2020, order entitled “In re July 2020 Bar Examination and Expansion of Practice Pending Admission during the Admission to the Practice of Law Process.” This order postponed the July 2020 Ohio Bar Examination to September 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

(2) Consider granting a “diploma privilege” for all individuals registered for the September 2020 Ohio Bar Examination; and

(3) Consider decreasing the Uniform Bar Examination minimum passing score from 270 to 266 for the September 2020 Ohio Bar Examination.

It is ordered by the court, sua sponte, that this cause is dismissed. The petition was filed as an action concerning the admission to the practice of law pursuant to the original jurisdiction of the court under Article IV, Section 2(B)(1)(g) of the Ohio Constitution. Upon consideration, the court determines that the petition is not an action pursuant to the court’s original jurisdiction but, rather, a request for the court to contemplate the exercise of its authority to promulgate rules governing the admission to the practice of law under Article IV, Section 5(B) of the Ohio Constitution.

Reviewing and considering the petition and the recommendations therein as an administrative matter, the court declines to implement the recommendations.

The court is mindful of the challenges presented by the evolving circumstances presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic and its impact upon bar-examination applicants. For this reason, the May 14, 2020, order postponed the July 2020 Ohio Bar Examination to September 2020 and temporarily expanded practice pending admission pursuant to Gov.Bar R. I(19) to allow recent law-school graduates to apply to the court for temporary supervised practice.

Furthermore, on July 22, 2020, the court issued the order entitled “In re Postponement of In-Person September 9-10, 2020 Ohio Bar Examination and Administration of Remote October 5-6, 2020 Ohio Bar Examination; Deadlines; Practice Pending Admission.” This order replaced the in-person September Ohio Bar Examination with a remote October 2020 examination. Additionally, it allowed applicants for the September Ohio Bar Examination to transfer their application to the February 2021 examination.

The court agrees with our colleagues in other jurisdictions who have recently denied similar petitions. It is the court’s obligation to protect the public and the integrity of the profession through oversight of the profession and its practitioners. The purpose of the bar examination is to ensure minimum competence of those admitted to the practice of law. With the aforementioned orders, the court has taken steps to minimize the concerns raised by the petition while continuing to carry out its responsibility to promote the integrity of the legal profession.

O’Connor, C.J., and Kennedy, French, Fischer, DeWine, Donnelly, and Stewart, JJ., concur.