

MEMORANDUM

To: Maine Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
From: Maine State Bar Association
Date: January 26, 2021

- The Maine State Bar Association (MSBA), a statewide not-for-profit trade association chartered in 1891 by the Maine Legislature [P.L. 1891, ch. 167], represents approximately 3,000 attorneys in the State in both public service and private practice. The Association's mission is to promote the honor, dignity and professionalism of lawyers, advance the knowledge, skills and interests of its members, and support the public interest in a fair and effective system of justice.
- The MSBA's policy-making body is its volunteer 22-member board of elected governors. The Board has 13 governors representing 11 districts created along county boundaries (including three representing Cumberland County), one governor representing the New Lawyers Section, one representing the Women's Law Section, one representing public service sector lawyers, and one representing in-house counsel. The board also includes the president, president-elect, vice president, immediate past president and treasurer. Governors serve two-year terms, and officers serve one-year terms. Kelly McDonald of Murray, Plumb & Murray is the current MSBA President.
- The Executive Director is the ranking non-volunteer official and is directly responsible to the Board for executing the duties and responsibilities of the position in a manner which promotes the Association's bylaws, policies, goals and objectives as established by the Board. Angela Armstrong serves as the Executive Director. She maintains a staff of eight, whose specialties lie in membership services, continuing legal education (CLE), communications and lawyer referral services.
- Key functions of the MSBA include conducting continuing legal education (CLE) programs for its members, providing practice management support and benefits, conducting annual judicial evaluations, providing support to and forums for members in specific areas of practice, and providing representation of its members in the Legislature.
 - The MSBA conducts a formal review process for current judges who are nominated for a new term. Jill Cramer of Bourque & Clegg is the current chair of the judicial evaluation committee.
 - The MSBA supports 28 sections covering a wide range of legal specialties (e.g. Family Law and Real Estate & Title Law) and constituencies (e.g. Women and Black, Indigenous & People of Color).
 - The MSBA maintains a Legislative Review & Response Committee, which reviews all bills and becomes engaged directly with the Legislature on a handful of issues related to its mission, particularly access to justice issues. MSBA retains outside legislative counsel to assist in these efforts, currently James Cohen of Verrill Dana, LLP.