



Taking Stock of a **MOMENTOUS YEAR**

OVERCOMING A THREAT TO TEXAS LAWYERS' SELF-GOVERNANCE. Overhauling the advertising review process. Expanding one of our top member benefits.

These are just a few of the State Bar's achievements during the 2021-2022 bar year. Each June, we start fresh with a new year, a new budget, and new leadership, and I am excited for what 2022-2023 has in store. First, though, I want to highlight some of the ways your State Bar worked to better serve Texas lawyers and all Texans over the past 12 months.

Preserving self-governance

Most importantly, we withstood a legal challenge to lawyers' self-governance and emerged with the State Bar's fundamental structure and purposes intact. The resolution of the *McDonald v. Firth* litigation ensures Texas lawyers will continue to practice in a self-regulated profession with an independent grievance system—a privilege that no other profession in Texas enjoys. And in another positive result from the litigation, the State Bar debuted a more transparent budgeting and expenditure-objection process that offers members more information than ever before on how their dues are spent.

New member benefits and services

New member services introduced in 2021-2022 include the Advertising Review Portal and the Identity Fraud Flag Program. The Advertising Review Portal, accessible through your My Bar Page at texasbar.com, makes it faster and more convenient to submit advertisements for State Bar approval. The Identity Fraud Flag Program gives lawyers a way to voluntarily report to the bar that they have been the victim of identity fraud, which helps protect the lawyer and the public from scammers.

Expanded member benefits

The State Bar expanded its Fastcase online legal research benefit, providing Texas lawyers with free access to millions of briefs, pleadings, motions, and orders through Docket Alarm within the Fastcase platform. Fastcase is among the ever-growing list of member benefit providers that offer discounted products and services to help Texas lawyers with the everyday practice of law. You can view them all at texasbar.com/benefits.

I look forward to reporting more progress from your State Bar in the coming year.

Sincerely,

TREY APFFEL

Executive Director, State Bar of Texas

Editor-in-Chief, *Texas Bar Journal*