



A Message From the President

Miles S. Winder III, Esq.

NJSBA

WE HEARD YOU

As you know, the New Jersey State Bar Association has endured a number of contested elections and runoff elections for leadership positions in recent years.

Not surprisingly, we heard from you about these elections as well as the nomination process.

We heard your concerns loudly and clearly:

We heard that the nomination process lacked transparency;

We heard that the nomination and election process led to unnecessary divisiveness and partisanship;

We heard that campaigns were intrusive;

We heard that the campaigns clogged your email inboxes; and

We heard that elections went on far too long and happened too often.

Today, I am pleased to report that the NJSBA Board of Trustees listened to what you said, and we have a plan to move forward and away from these ills that have plagued the process up to now. This requires your approval.

The board approved a thoughtful and comprehensive proposal that will change the association's bylaws to provide transparency in the selection of new leaders, as well as reduce the acrimonious campaigning and duration of any election.

These recommendations are the result of exhaustive efforts undertaken to examine the issues and gather information from you, bar leaders, past candidates, members of past nominating committees, the association's governing documents, and others who are involved in the nomination and election process. These proposals may not offer the perfect solution, but they provide one we believe will lead the association in the years ahead, bring it in line with practices of bar associations around the country, and vastly improve the untenable situation we found ourselves in for the last several years.

In an ironic twist, your vote is needed to make these changes. The vote will take place in the coming weeks, and information about voting will be sent soon.

These are changes you told us were important to you and this association. Now, the power to effect that change is in your hands. I ask that you give thoughtful consideration and attention to these proposals and urge you to vote 'yes' on the proposed bylaw amendments when the polls open Oct. 5 so we never have to watch history repeat itself.

Here is a summary of the proposed bylaw amendments that are meant to provide the NJSBA with a means of ensuring it has effective leaders. The proposals would:

- Make the Nominating Committee's process more transparent, including making the interview process open to the membership.
- Ensure the Nominating Committee confers with relevant sections, committees, divisions and other legal organizations when evaluating candidates seeking positions.
- Preserve the democratic process through an election by petition, but significantly reduce the number of election-related emails sent to NJSBA members and limit the distribution of unwanted campaign literature, while still providing candidates the ability to share information about their experience and position on issues through dedicated space on the NJSBA's website.
- Shorten the election process – with seven days allotted for voting, rather than 20. All voting will conclude in time to ensure the successful candidate can be sworn-in at the Annual Meeting and Convention, even if a runoff election is required.
- Provide the Board of Trustees with a role in the nomination process, by requiring its affirmation of the selections of the Nominating Committee, thereby making the nominees candidates of the NJSBA.

We need your vote. When you get your voting information, please vote 'yes' to approve the proposed bylaw changes.