

FAMILY LAW SECTION  
Respectfully submits the following position on:

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SB 0743

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The Family Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan itself, but rather a Section which members of the State Bar choose voluntarily to join, based on common professional interest.

The position expressed is that of the Family Law Section only and is not the position of the State Bar of Michigan.

The State Bar's position in this matter is to oppose the bill.

The total membership of the Family Law Section is 2,481.

The position was adopted after discussion and vote at a scheduled meeting. The number of members in the decision-making body is 21. The number who voted in favor to this position was 14. The number who voted opposed to this position was 0.

**Report on Public Policy Position****Name of Section:**

Family Law Section

**Contact person:**

Kent Weichmann

**E-Mail:**[weichmannk@att.net](mailto:weichmannk@att.net)**Bill Number:**

[SB 0743](#) (Meekhof) Occupations; attorneys; voluntary membership in state bar; establish. Amends sec. 901 of [1961 PA 236](#) (MCL [600.901](#)).

**Date position was adopted:**

January 25, 2014

**Process used to take the ideological position:**

Position adopted after discussion and vote at a scheduled meeting.

**Number of members in the decision-making body:**

21

**Number who voted in favor and opposed to the position:**

14 Voted for position

0 Voted against position

0 Abstained from vote

7 Did not vote

**Position:**

Oppose

**Explanation of the position, including any recommended amendments:**

SB 743 would make membership in the State Bar voluntary for attorneys. The bill was introduced in retaliation for the Bar's opposition to anonymous donations in judicial campaigns. The State Bar of Michigan and the courts are partners in the administration of justice in Michigan. The State Bar coordinates the regulation and discipline of attorneys, and the State Bar's activities benefit and protect the public. The Bar serves to:

- ensure access to the courts for all – the poor, the disabled, and others.
- facilitate law office technology learning.
- give guidance and resources to local bar associations.
- police itself, for the protection of the public.
- provide a Client Protection Fund to reimburse clients whose attorneys have misappropriated funds.

- assist in the review of Character and Fitness cases of Bar applicants.
- provide a self-help site for the use of those whom legal aid offices cannot serve due to funding and short staff.

The State Bar is an important guardian of Michigan's legal system, and works to make sure that system continues to serve the public. Dismantling the State Bar will remove an important safeguard, and make the legal system more susceptible to corruption. The Family Law Section opposes this bill.

**The text of any legislation, court rule, or administrative regulation that is the subject of or referenced in this report.**

<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2014-SB-0743>