

2025 SENATE JUDICIARY

SB 2053

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Judiciary Committee Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

SB 2053
1/8/2025

A Bill relating to state bar admission fee
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01:14 p.m. Chair Larson opened the meeting

Members present:

Chair Larson, Vice Chair Paulson, Senators: Castaneda, Cory, Luick, Myrdal, Braunberger

Discussion Topics:

- Application fee
- Increasing costs
- Cost comparisons

01:15 p.m. Petra Mandigo Hulm, Clerk of the Supreme Court, testified in favor and submitted testimony #28207

01:20 p.m. Chair Larson closed the hearing

01:20 p.m. Senator Myrdal moved a do pass

01:20 p.m. Senator Luick seconded the motion

Senators	Vote
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Bob Paulson	Y
Senator Ryan Braunberger	Y
Senator Jose L. Castaneda	Y
Senator Claire Cory	Y
Senator Larry Luick	Y
Senator Janne Myrdal	Y

Motion Carried 7-0-0

01:21 p.m. Senator Cory carried the bill

01:21 p.m. Chair Larson closed the hearing

Kendra McCann, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2053 ([25.8025.01000](#))

Judiciary Committee (Sen. Larson, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (7 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING), and be placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

JANUARY 8, 2025

Testimony of the State Board of Law Examiners
SENATE BILL NO. 2053

Chair Larson and members of the Committee, I am Petra Mandigo Hulm, Clerk of the Supreme Court, Secretary/Treasurer of the State Board of Law Examiners, and Secretary of the Disciplinary Board for lawyers. I manage the State Board of Law Examiners. I am appearing on behalf of the Supreme Court and the State Board of Law Examiners related to Senate Bill 2053.

The State Board of Law Examiners, through the Court System, is requesting to increase the application fee for the bar examination. The fee is \$150 and has not been increased since 1997. At that time, the legislature allowed an increase in the exam fee from \$50 to \$150. We are requesting an increase to \$200.

The exam is given to approximately 100 examinees per year and the total collected for timely applicants is approximately \$15,000. That amount does not cover expenses for administration of the examination. Examples of the costs involved include staff time, payment of proctors, payment of graders of the exam, the cost of the exam itself, supplies, and facility costs. The cost for us to buy the exam itself is \$132 per exam for standard non-accommodated exams. The cost for a venue is approximately \$4,000. In legislative years, we pay for locations for the February and July examinations. In non-legislative years, we pay for a location for the July examination due to the number of test takers. A significant amount of staff time goes into planning and administering the two-day bar examination. Additional days of examination occur with examinees with non-standard accommodated test takers.

Additionally, the Supreme Court adopted the new NextGen Bar examination starting in 2027. The cost of the exam is increasing at least \$50 per examinee. The National Conference of Bar Examiners, the entity from whom we buy the examination, has informed jurisdictions that it is losing money on its first vendor contract providing the electronic exam. We have been informed that future increase is likely beyond 2027.

Finally, North Dakota, I believe, has the lowest exam fee of all jurisdictions, even with the requested increase. Surrounding states are higher; Montana is \$620, South Dakota is \$450, and Minnesota is \$600 for a first-time test taker.

We respectfully request the committee vote a due pass for the amendment.

2025 HOUSE JUDICIARY

SB 2053

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Judiciary Committee
Room JW327B, State Capitol

SB 2053
2/18/2025

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 27-11-17 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the state bar admission fee.

9:35 a.m. Chairman Klemin opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Klemin, Vice-Chairman Karls, Vice-Chairman Vetter, Representatives Christianson, Henderson, Hoverson, Johnston, S. Olson, Satrom, VanWinkle, Wolff, Schneider

Members Absent: Representatives McLeod, Tveit

Discussion Topics:

- Cost of offering the state bar exam
- Bar Exam numbers

9:36 a.m. Petra Mandigo Hulm, Clerk of the Supreme Court, testified in favor and provided testimony #37947.

9:40 a.m. Representative S. Olson moved a Do Pass.

9:40 a.m. Representative Schneider seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Lawrence R. Klemin	Y
Representative Karen Karls	Y
Representative Steve Vetter	Y
Representative Nels Christianson	Y
Representative Donna Henderson	Y
Representative Jeff Hoverson	Y
Representative Daniel Johnston	N
Representative Carrie McLeod	A
Representative SuAnn Olson	Y
Representative Bernie Satrom	Y
Representative Mary Schneider	Y
Representative Bill Tveit	A
Representative Lori VanWinkle	N
Representative Christina Wolff	Y

9:41 a.m. Motion passed 10-2-2

9:41 a.m. Representative Schneider will carry the bill.

9:41 a.m. Chairman Klemin closed the hearing.

Wyatt Armstrong, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2053 ([25.8025.01000](#))

Judiciary Committee (Rep. Klemin, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (10 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 2 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2053 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

JANUARY 8, 2025

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SENATE BILL NO. 2053

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