

Guiding Justice Through Unchartered Waters
Western States Bar Conference 2026
Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort and Spa

----- Conference Agenda -----

Wednesday, April 8

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.
Paniolo Ocean Terrace

Chief Executives Breakfast
By invite only

9:00 a.m. – Noon
Paniolo III

Western States Bar Conference Executive Director Retreat
Facilitator: *Richard Spinello*, Executive Director, State Bar of New Mexico

4:30 – 6:15 p.m.
Paniolo Ocean Terrace

Registration

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Paniolo Ocean Terrace

Welcome Reception
Sponsored by Clio

Thursday, April 9

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.
Paniolo Ocean Terrace

Breakfast

7:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Naupaka I/II/III

Registration/Sponsors

8:30 – 8:45 a.m.
Naupaka I/II/III

Welcome to the Conference
Joel England, Secretary-Treasurer, Western States Bar Conference
Mark Murakami, President, Hawaii State Bar Association
Ben Hofmeister, President, Western States Bar Conference

8:45 – 9:15 a.m.
Naupaka I/II/III

ABA Update
Michelle Behnke, President, American Bar Association

Moderator: *Helen Hierschbiel*, Executive Director, Oregon State Bar

9:15 – 9:30 a.m.
Naupaka I/II/III

Roll Call of States
Wyoming, Washington, Utah

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9:30 – 10:45 a.m.
Naupaka I/II/III

Session 1 – Navigating Uncharted Seas: How our History and Enduring Principles will Help the Legal Profession Meet Current Challenges and Change

The legal profession is entering uncharted waters filled with unprecedented challenges. From evolving paraprofessional licensing to artificial intelligence to threats against attorneys and the courts, what it means to be a twenty-first-century lawyer is evolving. Beginning with the roots and development of attorney regulation and ethics, and with an eye toward how these historical antecedents inform the present landscape, this program will examine each of these major challenges. How do we address generative AI and paraprofessional licensing? Are these the changes we have been waiting for to address the access-to-justice gap, or will they introduce more uncertainty? How are the courts driving or resisting these changes?

But the systemic changes are not the only challenges facing the profession; our polarized political climate is bringing lawyers and courts into the crosshairs. How do our attorney oath and the Rules of Professional Conduct guide us, and can they? The seas ahead are uncharted and challenging, and it will require all of us working together to plot the best course.

John Mudd, Executive Director and General Counsel, State Bar of Montana

10:45 – 11:00 a.m.
*Naupaka I/II/III &
Naupaka Lanai*

Sponsor Break

11:00 – 12:00 p.m.
Naupaka I/II/III

Session 2 – Uniform State Laws: What They Are, Where They Come From, and Why We Should Care

ULC Special Counsel Libby Snyder will present an overview of the Uniform Law Commission (ULC), America's oldest state law reform organization. The ULC plays a vital role in our federalist system of government by providing a system for states to harmonize their laws on subjects where uniformity is beneficial, reducing the need for federal preemption and preserving the sovereignty of the states over traditional areas of state law. Attendees will learn how uniform laws

are drafted and receive an overview of all the ULC's current projects. Libby will also provide information about each WSBC state's uniform law commissioners and recent adoptions of uniform laws.

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Libby Snyder, Uniform Law Commission Special Counsel

12:00 – 12:20 p.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

Roll Call of States

Texas, South Dakota, Oregon, Oklahoma

❖ LUNCH & DINNER ON YOUR OWN

4:15 p.m.

Waikoloa Signature Sunset Sail Check In

Anaehoomalu Bay Beach (directly behind hotel)

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Signature Sunset Sail

Optional Event

Friday, April 10

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Paniolo Ocean Terrace

Breakfast

7:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

Sponsors

8:00 – 8:20 a.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

Sponsor Recognition

8:20 – 8:50 a.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

Clio Demonstration

Miquela Anzulovich, Affinity Partnerships Manager, Clio

8:50 – 9:00 a.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

National Conference of Bar Presidents Update

Patrick Palace, NCBP President

9:00 – 9:15 a.m.

Naupaka I/II/II

Roll Call of States

North Dakota, New Mexico, Nevada

9:15 – 10:15 a.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

Session 3 – Using AI in Bar Organizations: Theoretical Approaches and Practical Results

Explore how to use generative AI as a bar organization, including identifying areas where AI can improve efficiency while preserving human judgment. This presentation examines real use cases, such as

translating legal materials into plain language, supporting ethics helpline research, summarizing large complaint submissions, and using

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AI to update legal publications, to demonstrate how AI can reduce time spent on routine tasks.

Ankur Doshi, General Counsel, Oregon State Bar

10:15 – 10:30 a.m.
*Naupaka I/II/III &
Naupaka Lanai*

Sponsor Break

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.
Naupaka I/II/III

Session 4 – Disaster Legal Response and Recovery: Meeting Legal Needs Post - Disaster

Speakers will provide an overview of how Hawai'i has collaboratively responded to disaster legal needs and the role of legal services, bar associations, pro bono attorneys, and the courts in meeting those needs. They will additionally discuss common legal needs that have arisen during recent disasters, challenges encountered in meeting those needs, and their collective experiences from prior disasters.

David Kauila Kopper, Executive Director, Legal Aid Society of Hawaii
Angela Lovitt, Assistant Executive Director, Legal Aid Society of Hawaii
Facilitator: Cathy Betts, Executive Director, Hawaii State Bar Association

11:45 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.
Naupaka I/II/III

Roll Call of States

Montana, Idaho, Hawaii, Arizona, Alaska

❖ **LUNCH ON YOUR OWN**
Afternoon Free

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Luau Grounds

Reception/Dinner
Sponsored by Steno

Saturday, April 11

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.
Paniolo Ocean Terrace

Breakfast

8:15 – 9:30 a.m.
Paniolo I

Breakout Sessions for Bar Leaders

Large Bar (AZ, NV, OR, OK, TX, UT, WA)

Facilitator: Trey Appfel, Executive Director, State Bar of Texas

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Paniolo III

Small Bar (AK, HI, ID, MT, ND, NM, SD, WY)

Facilitator: *Tony Weiler*, Executive Director, State Bar Association of North Dakota

9:35 – 9:45 a.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

Sponsor Recognition

9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

Session 5 – Final Four Part 1 – CLEAR Report – Examining Legal Education & Licensing to Better Address Access to Justice

In August 2023, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators established the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR), a group comprised of chief justices and court administrators from states across the country. The Committee's mandate was to examine how legal education and licensure practices and processes can address the justice gap crisis and ensure public trust and confidence in the legal profession. After two years of extensive fact finding and examination, the CLEAR report was published in July of 2025. In this session, a panel of supreme court justices from New Mexico, Arizona, Alaska, and Hawaii (the Final Four) will discuss the findings from the CLEAR report and how the judiciary and bar can work together to implement its recommendations in an effort to aid access to justice efforts.

Chief Justice Ann A. Scott Timmer, Arizona Supreme Court
Justice C. Shannon Bacon, New Mexico Supreme Court
Chief Justice Daniel Winfree (retired), Alaska Supreme Court
Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald (retired), Supreme Court of Hawaii

Facilitator: *Ben Hofmeister*, WSBC President

10:45 – 11:00 a.m.

*Naupaka I/II/III &
Naupaka Lanai*

Sponsor Break

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11:00 a.m. – Noon

Naupaka I/II/III

Session 6 – Final Four Part 2 – Ensuring Public Trust in the Judiciary and the Bar

The Final Four picks up its discussion again, this time pivoting to the public's trust in the legal system. Public opinion polls indicate that faith in the judiciary and legal profession is relatively low. The panel will delve into how to address this sentiment and how distrust in the legal system impacts both the courts and our communities. The discussion will touch on a variety of topics and will involve a conversation on what bar associations can do to restore public trust in the courts and the rule of law.

Chief Justice Ann A. Scott Timmer, Arizona Supreme Court
Justice Shannon Bacon, New Mexico Supreme Court
Chief Justice Daniel Winfree (retired), Alaska Supreme Court
Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald (retired), Supreme Court of Hawaii

Facilitator: *Ben Hofmeister*, WSBC President

12:00 – 12:10 p.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

Announcement of New Leadership

Jeni Jensen, 2026-2027 WSBC President

Elizabeth Wright, 2026-2027 WSBC Secretary/Treasurer

12:10 – 12:20 p.m.

Naupaka I/II/III

Annual Business Meeting (for WSBC Leadership)