

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

At the Supreme Court of Appeals continued and held at Charleston, Kanawha County, on the 25th day of October, 2017, the following order was made and entered:

Re: Amendments to Chapter VII, ¶5.3A of the Rules to Govern Mandatory Continuing Legal Education in West Virginia, Bridge-the-Gap Program

On this day came the Court and considered recommended amendments to Chapter VII, ¶5.3A of the Rules to Govern Mandatory Continuing Legal Education in West Virginia, relating to the Bridge-the-Gap Program for lawyers newly-admitted to the West Virginia State Bar. The proposed amendments were developed by the Young Lawyers Section, and approved by the State Bar Board of Governors.

Upon consideration whereof, the Court is of the opinion to and does hereby approve the proposed amendments, effective July 1, 2018. Additions are indicated by underlining, and deletions are indicated by strikethrough.

**Rules and Regulations of the West Virginia State Bar
Chapter VII - Rules to Govern Mandatory Continuing Legal Education in West Virginia**

¶5.3A — Bridge the Gap Program

(a) *Obligation.* New graduates and new admittees, ~~beginning July 1, 1999,~~ are required to complete a mandatory Bridge-the-Gap ~~seminar~~ Program sponsored by the West Virginia State Bar ~~within six months prior to admission or within twelve~~ twenty-four months after admission to the West Virginia State Bar. The mandatory Bridge-the-Gap ~~seminar shall be recorded at least once per year.~~ Program shall be provided at the State Bar Annual Meeting at least once per year and shall additionally be provided at another location within West Virginia on a second date each year. The Bridge-the-Gap ~~course~~ Program will be provided free of charge to new admittees. ~~as an audio tape or video tape or CD Rom/DVD.~~ MCLE Continuing legal education credit shall be available for completing the mandatory Bridge-the-Gap ~~seminar~~ Program.

(b) *Suspension.* Any lawyer subject to this requirement who fails to complete the mandatory Bridge-the-Gap seminar within sixty days after written notice of noncompliance from the MCLE Commission shall have such lawyer's license to practice law in West Virginia be automatically suspended until such lawyer has complied with such requirement. Any member of the West Virginia State Bar otherwise in good standing who is suspended for failure to complete the mandatory Bridge-the-Gap program shall be reinstated as a member of the West Virginia State Bar upon completion of the mandatory course and fulfillment of other such administrative requirements.

(c) *Exemption.* A member required to complete the Bridge-the-Gap program may, upon application to and approval by the Executive Director, be exempted from the requirement if (1) the member can certify having been admitted to practice in another jurisdiction for a minimum of five years; or (2) the Commission can certify that the member has completed a mandatory new lawyer training program offered by the state bar of another jurisdiction, of at least seven credits,

including two credits of legal ethics, office management, and/or substance abuse. The request for an exemption must be filed no later than twenty-four months after admission to the West Virginia State Bar and no extensions of time are permitted.

(d) *Extension of time.* The time for completion of the Bridge-the-Gap program may, upon application to and approval by the Executive Director, be extended. Written applications for an extension must be received by the Executive Director no later than thirty days after the deadline to complete the Bridge-the-Gap program or obtain an exemption. If the written application includes supporting documentation that demonstrates hardship or other good cause for an extension, the member will be permitted to complete the Program at the next regularly scheduled opportunity. If the application for extension does not demonstrate hardship or good cause warranting an extension, the member must pay a late fee of \$350.00 and complete the Bridge-the-Gap program at the next regularly scheduled opportunity.

A True Copy

Entered: October 25, 2017

Attest: //s// Rory L. Perry II
Clerk of Court

