

November 16, 2015

BY EMAIL AND MAIL

David A. Wollin, Esquire, Chair
Rhode Island Board of Bar Examiners
Licht Judicial Complex
250 Benefit St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Wollin:

We write as a follow-up to our letters dated July 20, August 4, and October 1, 2015, and your latest letter of October 21, regarding accommodations for candidates who are nursing during the bar exam.

Your most recent letter to us advised that the Board was “was continuing to review and consider its policies concerning breastfeeding by bar examinees” and that we would be provided a substantive response “once the consideration of the matter by the Board and the Court is completed.”

We certainly appreciate the Board’s desire to carefully consider this issue and “get it right.” However, we note that December 1st is the cut-off date for applying to sit for the next Bar examination (taking place in February), and is also the cut-off date for any person needing special accommodations under the ADA to seek them. We assume the same deadline would be in place for other requested accommodations. Even if there is only a slim possibility that an applicant needing breastfeeding accommodations will be applying for the upcoming exam, we believe it is critical that this issue be addressed before another exam period goes by.

In calling for prompt action at this point, we note that it has been over three months since this issue was first raised with the Board. In addition, while they may vary in the details, every other state in New England has some type of breastfeeding accommodation policy in place. As we have previously noted, many other states across the country also have strong policies to accommodate breastfeeding women, and we have provided the Board with ready-made model language to consider.

Under the circumstances, we strongly believe there is no reason for this to be delayed any longer. We therefore request the Board to take up this matter expeditiously and adopt a policy designed to meaningfully accommodate breastfeeding applicants in time for the next Bar exam.

We thank you again for your consideration of this matter, and are hopeful for a positive response. We remain available to talk in more detail about this with you and members of the Board. In light of the time constraints referenced here, we look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Sincerely,

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cc: Nancy Mahoney
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