

Governor Brown Signs California Bill (AB 1005) for Judicial Diversity

August 19 -- San Francisco -- On August 16, California Governor Brown signed AB 1005. The Bar Association of San Francisco's board of directors, on behalf of the association's membership, sent a letter of support of this bill.

Below is the Legislative Counsel's Digest of the bill:

Existing law requires the Governor, the designated agency of the State Bar responsible for the evaluation of judicial candidates, and the Administrative Office of the Courts to annually collect demographic data relating to judicial applicants, judicial appointees or nominees, judicial candidates, and justices and judges, as specified, relative to ethnicity, race, and gender.

These entities are required to release the demographic data on or before March 1 of each year. Existing law encourages members of judicial selection advisory committees to recommend candidates from diverse backgrounds and cultures, as specified.

This bill would expand these provisions to include the collection of demographic data relative to disability and veteran status, as defined. The bill would provide that the collection of this demographic data is required only for judicial applicants, candidates, appointees, nominees, justices, and judges who apply, or are reviewed, appointed, nominated, or elected, on or after January 1, 2014, and would require the release of this data to begin in 2015. The bill would encourage the Governor and members of judicial selection advisory committees to give particular consideration to candidates from diverse backgrounds and cultures, as specified.

"The requirement that the Governor, the State Bar of California and the AOC collect and report data on the demographics of individuals going through the judicial appointment process has provided a very important tool in our efforts to ensure our bench is diverse and reflects the demographics in our state. We applaud our legislature and Governor for recognizing that "diversity" is a broadly defined term and that including persons with disabilities and veterans is the right thing to do. We hope that the collection and analysis of this data will lead to a bench that is more diverse in background and culture. After all, that is the goal of these efforts" says Yolanda Jackson, Deputy Executive Director and Diversity Director of BASF.

###

The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) is a nonprofit voluntary membership organization of over 8,000 attorneys, law students and legal professionals in the Bay Area. Founded in 1872, BASF is one of the largest and most dynamic metropolitan bar associations in the U.S., with a long and distinguished record of community action, public service and service to the legal profession.