



ALASKA BAR ASSOCIATION  
DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

2022 ALASKA BAR ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION

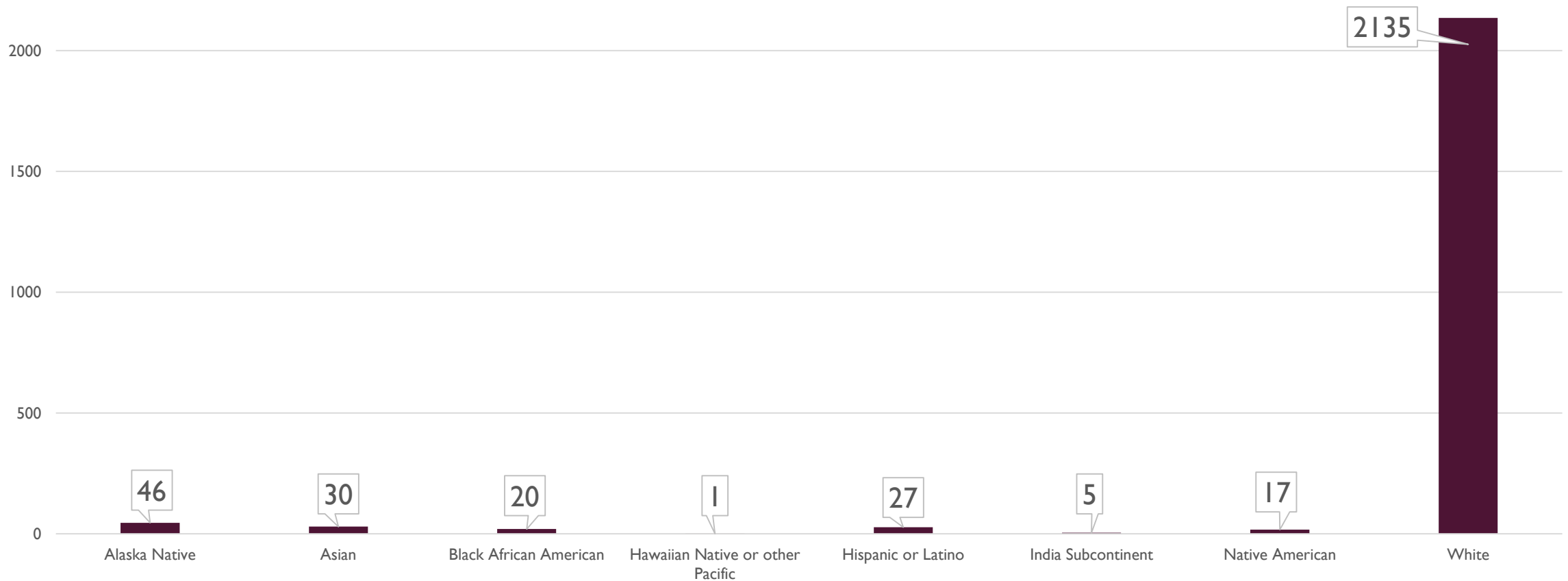
Kendri Cesar  
Renee Wardlaw  
Danielle Bailey

October 27 2022

# BACKGROUND

	RACE			GENDER	
	White alone (not incl. Hispanic)	All other Race/Ethnicity		Male	Female
<b>2020 U.S. Pop.</b>	60%	40%		49%	51%
<b>2020 U.S. Lawyers</b>	86%	14%		63%	37%
<b>2019 IL enrollment</b>	69%	31%		46%	54%
<b>2020 AK Pop.</b>	66%	34%		52%	48%
<b>2020 AK lawyers</b>	94%	6%		59%	41%
<b>2020 AK judges</b>	90%	10%		68%	32%

# NUMBER OF ACTIVE IN-STATE ATTORNEYS BY RACE OR ETHNICITY



# CREATION OF ALASKA BAR DIVERSITY COMMISSION

- **Created:** May 2021 by the Board of Governors
- **Goal:** to create a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse organization, and to increase the membership of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the Alaska Bar.
- **Membership:** 9 BIPOC Bar members, 2 BIPOC non-attorney members, and 2 ex officio members
- **Staffing:** Alaska Bar Association and Alaska Judicial Council
- **Requirements:** Hold public meetings & create a report with findings and recommendations for the Board of Governors



## Members:

Kendri Cesar (co-chair), Renee Wardlaw (co-chair), Shaun Lucas, Sen Tan, Greg Razo, Natasha Singh, Saagulik Liz Hensley, La quen nay Liz Medicine Crow, Xavier Mason, Jeff Robinson, Kari McCrea

# WHAT WILL THE DIVERSITY COMMISSION DO?

- **Identify Problems** – Systemic issues, policies, and practices that limit BIPOC membership
- **Collect Information** – Current initiatives, what has worked elsewhere to increase BIPOC Bar membership, how to better support diverse Bar members, what resources can be leveraged, etc.
- **Solicit input from Bar members and others** – Public Meetings, personal connections, transparent communication
- **Create an Action Plan** – Recommend solutions to the Board of Governors



# ACTION PLAN

Diversity Commission will furnish a report that identifies:

1. Systemic issues, policies, and practices impacting BIPOC membership in the Bar
2. Current barriers, impediments, and problems confronting BIPOC lawyers in the Bar
3. Ways that the Board can help address and work towards dismantling system issues, barriers, and impediments that contribute to a lack of a diverse Bar
4. Steps the Board can take to better attract, recruit, and retain BIPOC lawyers in Alaska
5. Ways to better support diverse members of the Bar

# TIMELINE AND ACTIONS OF THE DIVERSITY COMMISSION

- Commission formed in August 2021
- 11 meetings of the entire group (one in person, one open to the public)
- 5 subcommittee meetings
  - AAWL public meeting
  - Survey subcommittee
- Commission timeline extended to May 2023



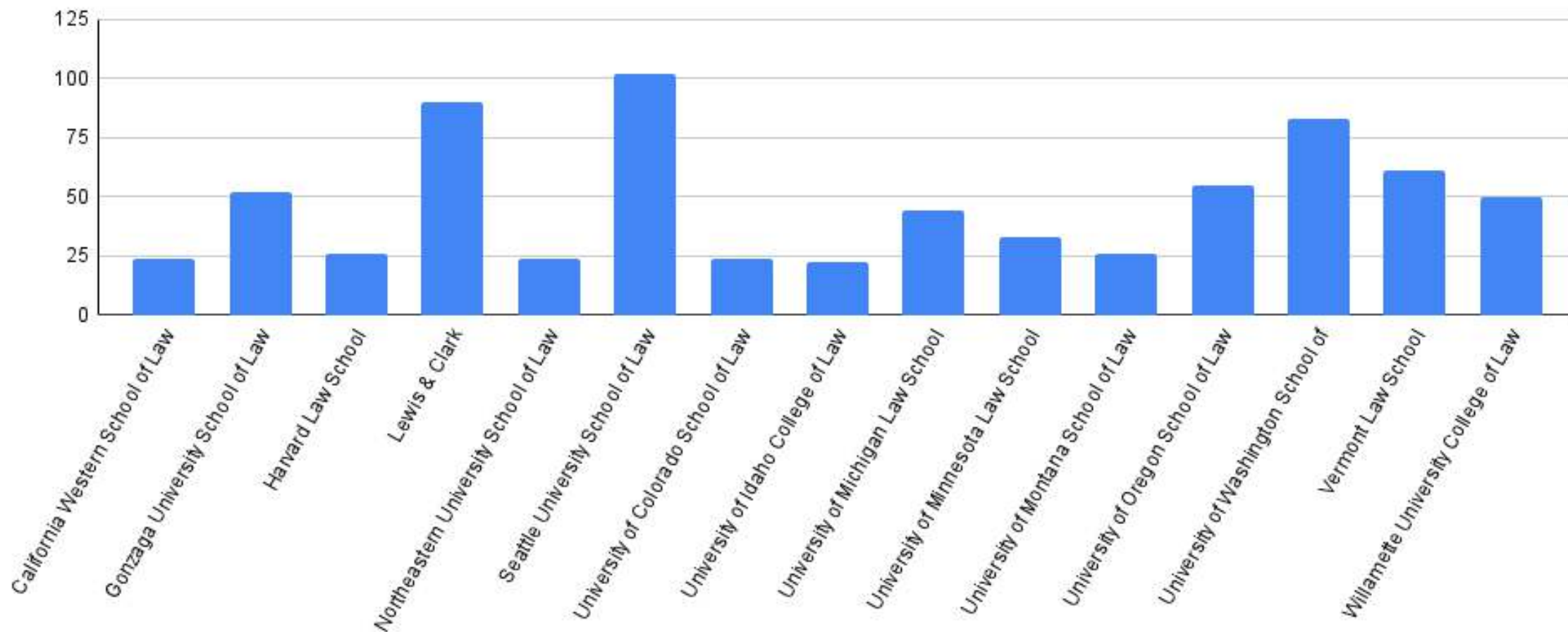
## IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

1. No law school in Alaska
2. Lack of pipeline of BIPOC lawyers
3. Law school expense
4. Bar exam
5. BIPOC lawyers not wanting to join or stay with Alaska Bar
6. BIPOC community does not see legal profession as a realistic option
7. Not feeling like Alaska community or Alaska Bar understands or values diversity issues



# ALASKA PIPELINE OF ATTORNEYS

2006-2021 Bar Admission by Law School (only showing schools w/ over 20 alums)


















# ALASKA PIPELINE OF ATTORNEYS

## Top 5 law schools for ethnic minorities

Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American or Alaskan Native	Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
80.95%	65.31%	28.48%	6.77%	3.64%
				
59.79%	52.90%	21.59%	5.87%	1.33%
				
57.55%	48.71%	20.93%	5%	1.19%
				
54.12%	40.28%	18.50%	4.89%	1%
				
47.07%	37.68%	18.24%	4.70%	0.85%
				

## Bottom 5 law schools for ethnic minorities

Black	Hispanic	Asian
0.44%	0.95%	0%
		
0.51%	0.98%	0.54%
		
0.60%	1.18%	0.75%
		
0.80%	1.54%	0.90%
		
0.91%	2.32%	0.91%
		

# DIVERSITY COMMISSION SURVEY

- Sent to all Bar members (4,625 members)
- 674 responses
- Respondents were younger, more racially/ethnically diverse, more likely to be female, and less likely to be from the Third Judicial District compared to Bar membership as a whole.
  - 21% BIPOC, compared to 6% of Bar membership
  - Median age 40-49, compared to 50-59 for Bar membership
  - 43% female compared to 38% for Bar membership
  - Smaller proportionate response rate from 3<sup>rd</sup> JD

## IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, HOW INCLUSIVE IS THE PRACTICE OF LAW IN ALASKA?

Most said the practice of law in Alaska is moderately to very inclusive.

- 68% of white respondents
- 44% of racially/ethnically diverse respondents

## HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU CONSIDER RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY TO THE LEGAL PROFESSION?

Most said racial and ethnic diversity is important or very important to the profession.

- 56% of white respondents
- 90% of racially/ethnically diverse respondents

# TO WHAT EXTENT IS YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK YOUR LEGAL NETWORK

Most said their social and legal networks either do not overlap or they have only a few professional friends in their social networks.

- 81% of racially/ethnically diverse respondents
- 66% of white respondents



# ALASKA BAR ASSOCIATION'S ROLE

## Does the Bar discriminate against BIPOC members?

- 32% had no opinion
- 40% said not at all or not often
- 3% said often
  - Bar exam
  - Ineffective outreach for participation (committees, leadership, convention, activities)
  - Systemic racism
  - Judicial selection system

## Could Bar do more to recruit, retain, and promote diversity in its membership?

- 22% had no opinion
- 33% said Bar could do a lot or a fair amount more
  - Targeted student outreach
  - Scholarships
  - Internships and mentorships
  - Partner with local Native Corporations
  - More diverse statements from the Bar

## FINAL THOUGHTS FROM RESPONDENTS

- *“When the communities and law enforcement show bias it is not hard to understand why someone would not want to practice in Alaska. In conducting interviews with out of state attorneys for recruitment, it is a question often asked as to how inclusive the community is as they have heard/read that it is not.”*
- *“This is such a minor issue. Please don’t waste the ABA’s time with focusing on this.”*
- *“Most of my clients are racial and ethnic minorities. I see every day how the lack of diversity among Alaska Bar membership and government offices impacts the way my clients are treated and how well they can navigate legal processes in Alaska. I cannot overstate how incredibly important I think it is for our state to recruit more minorities to join the Alaska Bar and work in the legal community here. If we want justice for all Alaskans, we have to work hard to make our bar membership reflective of the racial and ethnic makeup of our state as a whole.”*

# QUESTIONS?



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