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**Long-Term Lease During Covid-19 Causes LACBA to Consider Strategic Restructuring of Debt**

*Los Angeles, California – December 18, 2020 –* The Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA) is weighing its options regarding a long-term lease, signed pre-Covid, which the 142-year old organization has so far been unable to re-negotiate due to apparent unwillingness on the part of its landlord. Negotiations with the landlord continue. If those negotiations do not reach a satisfactory outcome in the near future, LACBA, like many enterprises and organizations in 2020, is exploring a strategic restructuring of its debt to shed itself of the lease burden. Even post-Covid, LACBA plans on allowing many of its staff to telecommute, which would require one of the largest bar associations in the nation to have a much smaller office footprint.

For years, LACBA has been working diligently to control costs. With the exception of its lease, those efforts have been highly successful. And they have only been redoubled since the pandemic began. As a result, in a potential restructuring, LACBA would have very few creditors. Although the pandemic has affected many income generating membership activities, its members are enthusiastic about programs costing much less. Further, LACBA is reinventing itself as an organization that can provide thought leadership and important events, including networking, without its members needing to battle Los Angeles traffic. Presiding Judge Kevin C. Brazile and Assistant Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor have relied heavily on LACBA’s reach to communicate information about presiding orders.

One option would see LACBA seeking the assistance of a chapter 5 (within chapter 11) proceeding to restructure its debt and establish stable footing for years to come. During the reorganization, Section meetings and programs such as the Task Force on Racial and Social Justice, Bridging the Gap (assisting new attorneys transition into the practice of law), the heralded Lawyer Referral Service (SmartLaw), Attorney-Client Mediation and Arbitration Services, and the indigent defense programs, would continue uninterrupted.

Member services would stand to benefit most from a reorganization. Staff would be freed up to assist members more, and focus on strengthening relationships with affiliate bar organizations. The new LACBA HUB for affiliates is fostering closeness in the bar community by promoting
cross-pollination of ideas and joint programming among Los Angeles County-area bar associations. LACBA has created this e-hub, a virtual home to connect with and serve the "spokes," all Affinity Bar Associations in the county whose members by definition have a certain affinity towards some common causes, characteristics, and/or diversities of all kinds, geographic included.

“Our board, a group of lawyers, sat down and determined that at this time, in this climate, all options must be on the table for LACBA,” says Tamila C. Jensen, LACBA’s President. “A strategic restructuring will allow LACBA to address head on many issues that will clear the way for a very bright future,” she added.

About the Los Angeles County Bar Association
LACBA was founded in 1878 and is one of the largest voluntary metropolitan bar associations in the country, with almost 20,000 members. LACBA serves attorneys, judges, and other legal professionals through 27 sections, committees, networking events, live and on-demand CLE programs, and pro bono opportunities, as well as public service and informational resources. Last year alone, LACBA members helped nearly 18,000 people and provided more than $3.7 million in pro bono services.