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Co-Chairs Laura Gibson and Chad Baruch  
SBOT Nominations and Elections Subcommittee

Re: Statement of Interest to Serve as President of the State Bar of Texas

Dear Co-Chairs Gibson and Baruch and Subcommittee Members:

Thank you for inviting me to submit a letter expressing my interest in being nominated as a candidate for President-elect of the State Bar of Texas.

Service to the legal community has been the highlight of my 32 years of law practice. While I love being a lawyer and have had the good fortune to work on some really interesting disputes at several great firms, the opportunities to serve have brought me the greatest joy and satisfaction-whether that be serving in elected or appointed leadership positions, taking on significant pro bono work, or mentoring younger lawyers. I've attached my resume which lists some of these activities. The timing is right in my career and family life to continue that service by taking on the responsibility of leading our bar.

I've worked hard over my career to make meaningful connections with lawyers across all walks of life, big firm, small firm, solos, plaintiff, defense, legal aid, in-house, government, rural, urban, and young and old. I get that it doesn't matter what kind of practice one has or where, the bottom line is that being a lawyer is hard. Hard mentally, hard physically. I think having leaders of our profession who readily recognize that fact is crucial to providing the support our profession needs so badly. I've been able to make meaningful connections at least in part because I've faced a number of the same kinds of challenges that so many other lawyers have faced. I've practiced at big, medium, and small firms and did a short stint in-house. I understand the pressures of bringing in clients, servicing them, and then collecting in order to keep the lights on. I received fee invoices during my in-house assignment and had to explain the value-add to the business. I understand juggling too much work and the significant stress of not having enough. I understand the pride of a big win for a client and the profound disappointment when you fall short. I get what it's like to have life-threatening health challenges along the way. My husband is a plaintiff's lawyer who has experienced his own share of professional and personal ups and downs. We raised three children who now are young professionals and who fully appreciate what it takes to work hard but put family first. Empathy comes naturally to me in the context of the practice of law and leadership.

From a geographic standpoint, my practice is one that frequently puts me in courts across the state. During many years, I've spent more time working in the Permian Basin, Galveston

County, Bexar County, Fort Bend County, Dallas, and places in between than I have in Houston. I've formed relationships—and friendships—with lawyers in all of those places, and those lawyers have enriched my own perspective on Texas legal practice and our bar.

From my years of bar work and relationships with lawyers across the state, I have a strong understanding of many of the issues faced by the State Bar, some new, others old. Our most recent leaders have calmed the waters and for that we are fortunate. Our future leaders should continue to steady the sea by focusing on the common issues that unite us, including topics such as artificial intelligence and wellness.

The transformational advances in technology may very well present the most significant issue for our bar and its members in the years ahead. Like the internet generally and electronic research platforms specifically, artificial intelligence has the potential to bring revolutionary change to what we do and how we do it. Our bar should be at the forefront of studying and recommending best practices for its use in both transactional and litigation practices. Can we harness the positive attributes and protect against the dangers? Can we utilize AI to increase the delivery of legal services to the disadvantaged? How can our members manage risk and comply with the canons of ethics? And how can we protect against the displacement of members of our bar? Engaging our sections in the discussion and consulting with technology experts who “see ahead” is key. Taking the lead on these issues would provide a valuable service to our members.

The health and well-being of Texas lawyers is another issue that touches us all. My first mentor committed suicide. Depression, addiction, and suicide continue to plague our profession, and the recognition of that and the support of our members in crisis should be at the forefront of what we do and who we are. We have tremendous programs for lawyers who are in troubled times; we also have a wonderful grassroots contingent of lawyers working on prevention and support. The State Bar should continue to support programming aimed at stress management and wellness through all stages of practice.

The State Bar of Texas is a source of pride for me. It is operated by highly professional, dedicated, and well-intentioned staff and volunteers whose mission is to serve lawyers across the state. I think we do it better than anyone anywhere else, and it would be a privilege and an honor to steward our bar through the years ahead.

All the best,



Denise Scofield