



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

AUG 29 2016

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1257 without my signature.

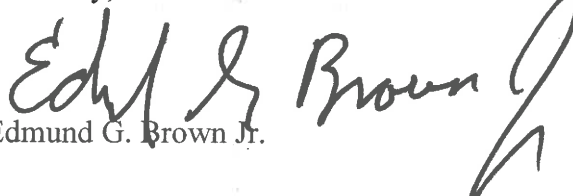
This bill requires an applicant for membership in the State Bar to complete at least fifty hours of supervised pro bono legal service. It also requires that a practicing lawyer or law professor supervise the student.

I certainly support law students and lawyers providing pro bono legal services. Some law schools already promote volunteerism and pro bono service in various ways and many employers also require a certain amount of pro bono hours for associates and clerks. While I commend the author for his desire to further these efforts, I don't believe a state mandate can be justified.

Law students in California are now contending with skyrocketing costs—often more than \$200,000 for tuition and room and board—and many struggle to find employment once they are admitted to the Bar. In this context, I believe it would be unfair to burden students with the requirements set forth in this bill.

Instead, we should focus on lowering the cost of legal education and devising alternative and less expensive ways to qualify for the Bar Exam. By doing so, we could actually expand the opportunity to serve the public interest.

Sincerely,

  
Edmund G. Brown Jr.