



Via email to boardofdirectors@texasbar.com

State Bar of Texas
Board of Directors

Re: President Larry McDougal

Dear Board of Directors:

I write in my capacity as President of National Lawyers Guild - San Antonio (NLG). I am a licensed attorney in the state of Texas since 2016. I believe that my license comes with moral and ethical obligations, which I must utilize to combat systematically oppress black Americans and injustice.

Today I write on behalf of NLG concerning the behaviors of Mr. McDougal. I believe that he must do what is best for the Bar and resign from his position without delay. His recent and past comments, and his overall handling of this situation, have damaged the prestige of the Bar and brought shame upon it. If he is not willing to resign, the Board should immediately take the appropriate steps necessary to remove him.

Irrespective of any apology issued, Mr. McDougal's recent and past discriminatory comments disqualify him to serve as the principal leader for the Bar. He has lost the respect of too many of his constituents, who are compelled to join in order to practice in Texas.

Mr. McDougal's supporters correctly point out that he has the right to freedom of speech, but freedom of speech does not entail freedom from consequences. To the contrary, when a person in a position of power makes derogatory and divisive remarks, unbecoming of that position, he should expect to be held to account. The President of the State Bar of Texas must be held to a high standard - serving in such a leadership role is a privilege, not a right. Moreover, the Bar has a compelling interest in maintaining the public perception of the integrity of the profession in order to facilitate a system with the purpose of administering justice neutrally.

This is not a slippery slope argument or "cancel culture." Mr. McDougal's pattern of discriminatory remarks, including one made under the veil of legal authority, after he was elected is the sole reason he must be removed. He may be allowed to continue to practice as an attorney, however, I do not wish to be a part of a mandated organization that is chaired by such disgrace.

As for the Bar at large, we must decide whether we are willing to stand up, put our collective foot down, and declare racism to be unwelcome within our professional ranks, especially among our leaders. Our State Bar President, Larry McDougal, has lost the trust necessary to lead, with conviction and compassion, statewide efforts to actively work against the multidimensional aspects of racism in our profession.¹ He must be removed.

Thank you for your consideration,

/s/ Melanie Lira, SBOT: 24091298

President of National Lawyers Guild - San Antonio

¹ See Robert J. Patterson's definition of anti-racism available at <https://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-anti-racism-how-to-be-anti-racist-2020-6> (last visited July 22, 2020).