To the extent that lawyers meet the obligations of their professional calling, the occasion for government regulation is obviated. Self-regulation also helps maintain the legal profession's independence from government domination. An independent legal profession is an important force in preserving government under law, for the abuse of legal authority is more readily challenged by a self-regulated profession.

- Preamble to the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct
The North Carolina State Bar is the government agency that regulates the legal profession for the protection of the public. The State Bar currently regulates over 29,000 active North Carolina lawyers. Although the State Bar is responsible for the administration of numerous programs for the improvement of the legal profession, the key regulatory responsibilities of the State Bar are the promulgation of the Rules of Professional Conduct and the investigation and prosecution of lawyers who violate the State Bar’s code of ethics.
The State Bar protects the public by issuing professional discipline to lawyers. Allegations of lawyer misconduct are investigated by the State Bar's professional staff and reviewed by the Grievance Committee of the State Bar Council. Cases that are not resolved at the Grievance Committee level are tried before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, an independent administrative tribunal composed of lawyers and non-lawyers.

The State Bar provides advice to lawyers who are faced with ethical questions through its Ethics Committee and its professional staff. The committee regularly reviews and recommends changes to the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct, the ethical code to which North Carolina lawyers must conform their conduct and pursuant to which a lawyer may receive professional discipline.

The State Bar, through its Authorized Practice Committee and professional staff, investigates complaints and obtains injunctions to prevent violations of the statutes prohibiting the unauthorized practice of law. These cases often involve non-lawyers who mislead the public about their ability to provide legal services and who take money from members of the public without providing the offered service.
PROGRAMS

CLIENT SECURITY FUND
Reimburses clients who suffered financial loss as a result of dishonest conduct by lawyers.

ATTORNEY-CLIENT ASSISTANCE
Responds to thousands of inquiries each year from members of the public who need assistance with their lawyers.

FEE DISPUTE RESOLUTION
Offers clients a way to resolve their fee disputes with their lawyers. All lawyers are required to participate in the process when initiated by a client.

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION
Establishes annual minimum educational requirements and enforces lawyers’ compliance with these standards.

LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Protects the public from impaired lawyers and assists lawyers suffering from and impaired by chemical dependency and/or mental illness.

PARALEGAL CERTIFICATION
Certifies paralegals who meet certain criteria indicative of special competence in their profession.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL
Provides training for military and civilian lawyers to enable them to better serve the legal needs of members of the armed services and their dependents in North Carolina.

INTEREST ON LAWYERS’ TRUST ACCOUNTS
Collects interest on lawyers’ general trust accounts and makes grants under the direction of its Board, primarily to support the provision of free legal services to North Carolina’s indigent citizens.

LAW PRACTICE WIND DOWN
Facilitates the wind down of law practices of lawyers who are unavailable due to death, disappearance, disability, or disbarment by identifying and providing resources to court-appointed trustees.

SPECIALIZATION
Certifies lawyers who satisfy certain criteria demonstrating special substantive knowledge, skill, and proficiency in several discrete areas of the law.

LAW SCHOOL THIRD-YEAR PRACTICE
Certifies law students as eligible for supervised clinical practice in the courts in accordance with certain criteria.
The State Bar and Supreme Court adopted a temporary rule allowing lawyers from across the country to provide needed pro bono legal services to indigent victims of Hurricane Florence.

The State Bar's first Annual Report was released in March, and the first live stream of a State Bar Council Meeting occurred in October.

Alice Neece Mine was installed as the agency's Executive Director, succeeding Tom Lunsford, who had held the post since 1992.

North Carolina became the second state in the nation to add a mandatory technology hour to lawyers' continuing legal education requirements.
From the Mountains to the Sea

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