

## Assembly Bill No. 1703

### CHAPTER 137

An act to amend Section 6072 of the Business and Professions Code, relating to attorneys.

[Approved by Governor July 10, 2002. Filed with  
Secretary of State July 11, 2002.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1703, Steinberg. Attorneys: pro bono services.

Commencing January 1, 2003, existing law requires the contracting law firm of a contract with the state for legal services exceeding \$50,000 to certify that it agrees to make a good faith effort to provide a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services during each year of the contract. Existing law provides that the minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services may be either (1) 30 times the number of attorneys in the law firm with the hours prorated on an actual day basis for any contract period of less than a full year or (2) 10% of the contract.

This bill would define "10% of the contract" to mean the number of hours equal to 10% of the contract amount divided by the average billing rate of the firm.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 6072 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

6072. (a) A contract with the state for legal services that exceeds fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) shall include a certification by the contracting law firm that the firm agrees to make a good faith effort to provide, during the duration of the contract, a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services during each year of the contract equal to the lesser of either (1) 30 multiplied by the number of full-time attorneys in the firm's offices in the state, with the number of hours prorated on an actual day basis for any contract period of less than a full year or (2) 10 percent of its contract with the state. "Ten percent of the contract" shall mean the number of hours equal to 10 percent of the contract amount divided by the average billing rate of the firm.

(b) Failure to make a good faith effort may be cause for nonrenewal of a state contract for legal services, and may be taken into account when determining the award of future contracts with the state for legal services. If a firm fails to provide the hours of pro bono legal services



set forth in its certification, the following factors shall be considered in determining whether the firm made a good faith effort:

(1) The actual number of hours of pro bono legal services provided by the firm during the term of the contract.

(2) The firm's efforts to obtain pro bono legal work from legal services programs, pro bono programs, and other relevant communities or groups.

(3) The firm's history of providing pro bono legal services, or other activities of the firm that evidence a good faith effort to provide pro bono legal services, such as the adoption of a pro bono policy or the creation of a pro bono committee.

(4) The types of pro bono legal services provided, including the quantity and complexity of cases as well as the nature of the relief sought.

(5) The extent to which the failure to provide the hours of pro bono legal services set forth in the certification is the result of extenuating circumstances unforeseen at the time of the certification.

(c) In awarding a contract with the state for legal services that exceeds fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), the awarding department shall consider the efforts of a potential contracting law firm to provide, during the 12-month period prior to award of the contract, the minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services described in subdivision (a). Other things being equal, the awarding department shall award a contract for legal services to firms that have provided, during the 12-month period prior to award of the contract, the minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services described in subdivision (a).

(d) As used in this section, "pro bono legal services" means the provision of legal services either:

(1) Without fee or expectation of fee to either:

(A) Persons who are indigent or of limited means.

(B) Charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, and educational organizations in matters designed primarily to address the economic, health, and social needs of persons who are indigent or of limited means.

(2) At no fee or substantially reduced fee to groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights.

(e) Nothing in this section shall subject a contracting law firm that fails to provide the minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services described in subdivision (a) to civil or criminal liability, nor shall that failure be grounds for invalidating an existing contract for legal services.

(f) This article shall not apply to state contracts with, or appointments made by the judiciary of, an attorney, law firm, or organization for the



purposes of providing legal representation to low- or middle-income persons, in either civil, criminal, or administrative matters.

(g) This article shall not apply to contracts entered into between the state and an attorney or law firm if the legal services contracted for are to be performed outside the State of California.

(h) The provisions of this article shall become operative on January 1, 2003.

