

FILED

07/27/2021

Bowen Greenwood
CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF MONTANA

Case Number: PR 06-0422

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

PR 06-0422

FILED

JUL 27 2021

IN RE PETITION OF ABRA BELKE

ORDER
Bowen Greenwood
Clerk of Supreme Court
State of Montana

Abra Belke has petitioned for the Court to either “temporarily waive the three-year time period to transfer her Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) passing score” or grant temporary admission pending her taking the Montana Bar Examination in February 2022. She also requests that the Court waive the three-year test requirement for the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE).¹

Belke sat for and passed the UBE as part of the Washington Bar Exam in 2017. Admission by transfer of a passing UBE score requires that the applicant have achieved the required scaled score “within the three years preceding the date of the application.” Rule IV.A.2., Rules for Admission to the Bar of Montana. Belke passed the UBE in 2017, over three years ago. We have denied previous requests for this waiver of this Rule because such a practice by the Court would quickly eviscerate the three-year rule. *See In re Petition of Kathleen L. Smithgall*, Order, May 25, 2021.

We have granted temporary or provisional admission to qualified applicants pending their sitting for the bar exam. As we explained in *Petition of Gosch*, “[t]emporary admission until sitting for the bar exam may be appropriate in circumstances where a candidate does not qualify for admission on motion or for transfer of a UBE score.” *Petition of Gosch*, 07-0303, March 7, 2016. As Belke notes, we recently granted temporary admission to an applicant, pending sitting for the bar exam, who did not qualify under the Rules for admission either by score transfer or upon motion. *Petition of Kathleen L. Smithgall*, Order, June 15, 2021. Belke has established good cause for temporary admission until taking the bar exam in February 2022.

¹ The petition is submitted by Oliver H. Goe and Abbie J. Nordhagen Cziok, Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry & Hoven, P.C. Abra Belke has signed the affidavit attached to the petition.

Belke also requests waiver of the three-year test requirement for the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE). By rule, applicants for admission upon examination must provide evidence of the requisite score on an MPRE taken within three years of sitting for the Montana bar exam. Rule VII.A.3, Rules of Admission. According to the petition, Belke passed the MPRE in 2017, has since practiced law in Washington and has not been “the subject of any written complaints pending before a disciplinary agency.” Belke has established good cause for waiver. Therefore,

IT IS ORDERED that the request for waiver of the three-year test requirement for submission of a prior MPRE score in conjunction with Petitioner’s admission by examination is GRANTED.

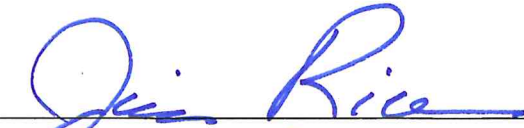
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the request for temporary admission to the State Bar of Montana pending Petitioner’s sitting for the bar exam in February 2022 is GRANTED. The Clerk of this Court will administer the usual oath and issue a temporary certificate granting Petitioner permission to practice law. This admission expires upon the issuance of Petitioner’s score for the February 2022 administration of the bar exam.


The Clerk is directed to provide copies of this order to Petitioner and to the State Bar of Montana.

DATED this 27th day of July, 2021.



Chief Justice







James Joseph Shea

Laurie M. H.

Pete Baker
Justices