

**For immediate release**

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### **Law Firms Lag in Hiring Minorities**

For the second year, the Austin Black Lawyers Association and the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin held a news conference to issue a report card grading the progress of Austin's largest law firms in hiring minority lawyers.

Although the most recent statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau show that the minority population in Texas is approximately 47 percent and continues to grow at a rapid pace, the report card reveals that the hiring of minority lawyers by Austin law firms fails to meet the state average.

Of 1,211 attorneys employed by the 26 largest law firms in Austin, only 119 — or 9.8 percent — are African American, Hispanic, Asian American, or Native American. That is compared to 12 percent, which is the percentage of minority lawyers licensed to practice law in Texas.

This year, eight Austin law firms earned an "A" for their efforts in hiring minority lawyers. Those firms are Bickerstaff Heath Smiley Pollan Keever & McDaniel, Brobeck Phleger & Harrison, Davis & Wilkerson, Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich, Hilgers & Watkins, Lloyd Gosselink Blevins Rochelle Baldwin & Townsend, Locke Liddell & Sapp, and Thompson & Knight.

Four Austin law firms received failing grades for their efforts in hiring minority lawyers, including one — Armbrust, Brown & Davis — that refused to participate in the survey. Additionally, three law firms earned "Bs," five firms received "Cs," and six firms received "Ds."

This year's report differs from last year's report card issued by the ABLA and the HBAA in several respects. The report card was expanded to include the 26 largest law firms in Austin, and a new category for minority law clerks was added. Finally, law firms were asked to self-report the number of minority attorneys and minority law clerks in their firms.

The Austin Black Lawyers Association and the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin remain committed to helping law firms increase their hiring and retention of minority lawyers. Last year, the groups hosted a workshop on hiring minority lawyers for law firms that were graded in the report card. This fall, the HBAA will host its third annual job fair for law firms to interview minority law students.

The ABLA and HBAA pledge to continue issuing their report card on an annual basis to focus attention on the issue of hiring and retaining minority lawyers.

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