

RESPONSE BY MEMBERS OF THE BOYD SCHOOL OF LAW FACULTY AND STAFF TO ALAN LEFEBVRE’S “MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT”

As members of the faculty and staff of UNLV’s William S. Boyd School of Law, we were dismayed to read the May 2014 *Nevada Lawyer* column by Alan J. Lefebvre, written in his capacity as President of the State Bar of Nevada. We fear that the tone of Mr. Lefebvre’s undignified column brings disrespect on the Bar and undermines principles of professionalism that we endeavor to instill in our students.

Mr. Lefebvre’s ostensible subject was Nevada’s prohibition on same-sex marriage. He disparaged the conclusion by Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto and endorsed by Governor Brian Sandoval that the ban cannot be defended in federal court. There are reasonable debates to be had about how our state’s officials should respond to a rapidly shifting legal landscape. But such debates require a climate of mutual respect.

The mission of the State Bar of Nevada is, in part, to “elevate the standard of honor, integrity, and courtesy in the legal profession” and “to promote a spirit of cordiality” among lawyers. In our roles as faculty and staff at Nevada’s only law school, we want to pass these values on to our graduates. It is thus regrettable that Mr. Lefebvre’s essay consists largely of insults, ad hominem attacks, sarcasm, and sectarian references that are simply inappropriate for the leader of an important institution in a vibrant and diverse state.

We recognize that issues like marriage equality naturally inspire passionate responses. But in the legal profession passion must be expressed with dignity and thoughtful analysis. Mr. Lefebvre’s column was lacking in the civility that should guide the behavior of every Nevada attorney. It is a serious disappointment for such indignity to emanate from the leader of the state bar.

The views expressed above are those of the undersigned individuals and not of the Boyd School of Law or the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

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