

MEMBER:
COMMITTEE ON THE
JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT REFORM
COMMITTEE ON
SMALL BUSINESS
ASSISTANT WHIP

Linda T. Sánchez
39TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

DC OFFICE:
1007 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6676

DISTRICT OFFICE:
4007 PARAMOUNT BLVD.
SUITE 106
LAKEWOOD, CA 90712
(562) 429-8499

www.lindasanchez.house.gov

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 19, 2005

Ms. Robin Greathouse
Accreditation and State Liaison, U.S. Department of Education
Room 7105, MS 8509
1990 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Ms. Greathouse:

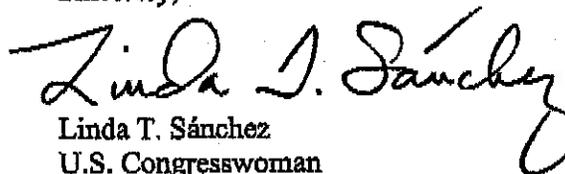
The American Bar Association has placed Whittier Law School's accreditation on probation based solely upon low bar passage rates among students the first time they attempted the exam. I have requested that Secretary Spellings direct the ABA to rescind the probation until your office investigates this matter and has the opportunity to reach its own conclusions.

Your investigation will find a host of procedural irregularities including inconsistency in the application of rules about first-time bar passage rates. You will also find an unusual degree of secrecy surrounding the ABA's decision-making process. I ask that you examine whether the ABA should focus its sole attention on first-time bar passage rates and whether this focus contradicts the ABA's explicit mission to reach out to underprivileged communities. The use of a single test and first-time pass rates on that test as a marker of educational effectiveness or as a predictor of graduates' professional competence is inappropriate and not well-reasoned. Such a narrow criterion ignores the fact that many students who fail on the first try at the bar exam pass on the second try, and it disadvantages schools like Whittier with a mission and commitment to an historically underserved and diverse student body. For many of my constituents, particularly those whose first language is not English, the bar exam may be daunting. Yet, they ultimately pass and proceed to serve their communities and the citizens of this state proudly and with distinction.

Please include this letter in the materials for the NACIQJ review of the ABA this December. If the Congressional schedule permits, **I expect to appear in person at the open hearings as well.**

In the interim, I ask you to meet with President Sharon Herzberger and Dean Neil Cogan of Whittier Law School to hear of their successes in educating my constituents, of Whittier's Quaker tradition of service which is instilled in their graduates, and of the damage they have experienced at the hands of the ABA.

Sincerely,


Linda T. Sánchez
U.S. Congresswoman