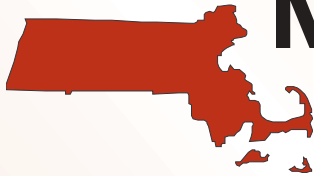


Lawyer Discipline

REPORT CARD



MASSACHUSETTS

Overall Grade: **B-**

About Massachusetts' Lawyer Discipline System:

★ **Winner: Best Disciplinary Agency in the Nation Overall.** While the Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers is a model for Openness and Fairness, the agency does not provide non-lawyers with a sufficient voice in the discipline process and fails to promptly follow-up on consumers' grievances. The agency's overall grade of B- reflects the fact that even the best disciplinary agency in the nation requires significant improvements.

★ **Runner Up: Best Telephone Services.** The Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers provides direct assistance to consumers, accommodates individuals with limited English proficiency, and has developed an Attorney and Consumer Assistance Program (ACAP) to help consumers resolve problems with their attorneys before a formal grievance must be filed.

★ **Honorable Mention: Website.** The Board's website informs the public of upcoming disciplinary hearings to attend and allows a consumer to check to see if his or her attorney has ever been publicly disciplined.

↑ Disciplinary procedures are a model for the nation: Unlike 38 states, Massachusetts does not prohibit individuals from speaking publicly about their grievances. In addition, the Board of Bar Overseers requires that misconduct be proven through a "preponderance of the evidence" – the same standard required in other civil proceedings. Further, Massachusetts consumers do not have to fear that they may be sued for filing grievances against their attorneys because consumers are provided with absolute civil immunity.

Adequacy of Discipline Imposed	C
Publicity and Responsiveness	B
Openness of the Process	B
Fairness of Disciplinary Procedures	A
Public Participation	C
Promptness	F
Overall Grade	B-

Compiled by
HALT
 An Organization of
 Americans for Legal Reform

To file a grievance against an attorney licensed in Massachusetts, obtain a complaint form by contacting the Attorney and Consumer Assistance Program at (617) 728-8750.