

REVISED JUDICATURE ACT OF 1961 (EXCERPT)
Act 236 of 1961

600.901 State bar; membership; public body corporate.

Sec. 901. The state bar of Michigan is a public body corporate, the membership of which consists of all persons who are now and hereafter licensed to practice law in this state. The members of the state bar of Michigan are officers of the courts of this state, and have the exclusive right to designate themselves as "attorneys and counselors," or "attorneys at law," or "lawyers." No person is authorized to practice law in this state unless he complies with the requirements of the supreme court with regard thereto.

History: 1961, Act 236, Eff. Jan. 1, 1963.

Constitutionality: The State of Michigan, through the combined actions of the Supreme Court, the Legislature, and the State Bar, may compulsorily exact dues, and require association of attorneys, to support only those duties and functions of the State Bar which serve a compelling state interest and which cannot be accomplished by means less intrusive upon the First Amendment rights of objecting attorneys. Falk v State Bar, 418 Mich 270; 342 NW2d 504 (1983).

The regulation of the practice of law, the maintenance of high standards in the legal profession, and the discharge of the profession's duty to protect and inform the public are purposes in which the State of Michigan has a compelling interest justifying unavoidable intrusions on the First Amendment rights of attorneys; on the other hand, political and legislative activities are impermissible intrusions, as are activities designed to further commercial and economic interests of the members of the bar. Falk v State Bar, 418 Mich 270; 342 NW2d 504 (1983).