

## **'Insurance Coverage Law' certification takes another step forward**

The Florida Bar

The Board of Legal Specialization and Education is poised to grant final approval of a proposed new "Insurance Coverage Law" board certification program, after sponsors agreed to make final revisions.

"The BLSE approved the new certification area in concept, but the standards need additional work to comply with Rule 6-3," according to a staff report from a November 8 meeting.

BLSE could approve the proposal at its next meeting in January, according to the report. From there, the proposal faces vetting by Florida Bar committees, and ultimately, the Board of Governors. The Supreme Court will make a final determination.

Rule 6-3 governs the Bar's board certification program. Covering 27 practice areas, Florida's program is one of the most robust in the nation. But sponsors with the Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section say the new certification program is needed to fill a "void" in insurance law.

Florida homeowners who need legal assistance to help recover from three major hurricanes in the past year will especially benefit, Tampa insurance lawyer Debby Crockett predicted earlier this month.

"And certainly, after every hurricane season, it becomes more and more apparent that Florida consumers need to be able to seek out experienced board-certified attorneys for help when insurance companies completely deny coverage or otherwise refuse to provide 100% coverage available under policies that — by the way — policy holders bought and paid for through ever-increasing premiums."

Crockett chaired a RPPTL panel that spent months surveying Bar sections and committees. Sponsors gathered pledges from more than 258 attorneys who intend to pursue certification if an insurance coverage law program becomes available.



The proposal is endorsed by the non-profit, consumer advocacy group United Policy Holders, which noted that, “in the wake of natural disasters, it is challenging for Florida residents to identify qualified counsel on matters of insurance coverage.”

The Florida Justice Association’s Property Insurance Section and the Defense Lawyers Association also endorse the proposal, signifying that it has broad appeal, Crockett said.

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