

Supreme Court of Texas

Misc. Docket No. 26-9051

Imposition of Probationary Conditions On a Law License

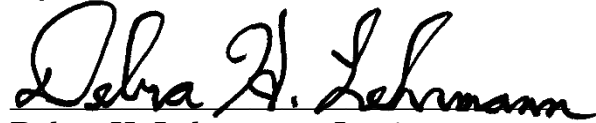
Pursuant to the recommendation in the attached order of the Board of Law Examiners, the law license issued to Jessica Rose Sexton is now a Probationary License under Rule 16 of the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Texas.

The Probationary License is subject to the conditions and time period set out in the Board's order.

Dated: June 19, 2026.



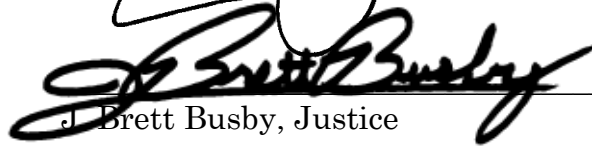
James D. Blacklock, Chief Justice



Debra H. Lehrmann, Justice



John P. Devine, Justice



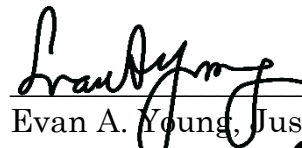
J. Brett Busby, Justice



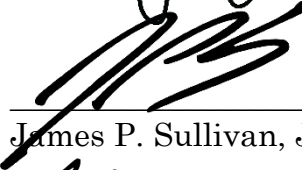
Jane N. Bland, Justice



Rebeca A. Huddle, Justice



Evan A. Young, Justice



James P. Sullivan, Justice



Kyle D. Hawkins, Justice

TEXAS BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS

IN THE MATTER OF

§

DOCKET NO. H-12-19-25-8

§

JESSICA ROSE SEXTON

§

AUSTIN, TEXAS

Order

Jessica Sexton violated the Texas Bar Exam Security Policy when she brought prohibited items—namely, at least 37 index cards with notes—into the secure exam area during the July 2025 Texas bar exam. She made a false statement to the Board when she signed an honor pledge at the end of the exam asserting that she had abided by the Texas Bar Exam Security Policy. After being licensed, she made a second false statement to the Board when she told staff that she had not taken any prohibited items into the secure exam area. It was not until staff presented her with evidence that her fingerprint had been found on one of the index cards that she admitted that she had taken the cards into the secure exam area.

A three-member panel of the Board of Law Examiners finds that Ms. Sexton obtained her law license fraudulently or by willful failure to comply with the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Texas (Rules), making her license subject to revocation per Rule 17(b). The Panel recommends that her law license be immediately converted to a two-year probationary license.

Findings of Fact

1. On April 30, 2025, Ms. Sexton applied for admission to the Texas bar through the July 2025 Texas bar exam. (BLE Ex. 2.)
2. Several times before the exam, staff sent Ms. Sexton the Texas Bar Examination General Instructions which contain the Texas Bar Exam Security Policy. The Policy tells examinees, in part, “You cannot bring Prohibited Items into the Secure Area,” and “Any pockets in your clothing must be empty.”
3. On July 29-30, 2025, Ms. Sexton sat for the Texas bar exam in San Antonio. During that time, she entered the Secure Area with at least 37 index cards containing study notes. At some point, she went to the restroom in the

Secure Area and placed the index cards in the feminine products bin in a bathroom stall.

4. On each day of the exam, Board member Cynthia Orr delivered verbal instructions to the examinees beginning at approximately 8:30 a.m. The verbal instructions included this final warning:

If we find that you have study materials, a cell phone, watch, or any other Prohibited Item not in a Yondr pouch after this announcement, you will be immediately disqualified from this bar exam and required to leave the exam room.

This is your final warning. If you have study materials, a cell phone, watch, or any other Prohibited Item not in a Yondr pouch, raise your hand.

5. After Ms. Orr read this final warning, Ms. Sexton did **not** raise her hand.

6. On the second day of the exam, the exam began at approximately 8:49 a.m. At approximately 10:37 a.m., while the exam was underway, a proctor found at least 37 index cards¹ containing notes in the feminine products bin in a stall in a bathroom located within the Secure Area. (BLE Ex. 8 at 34; BLE Ex. 18 at 125.) The proctor brought the bin liner containing the index cards and other trash to Board staff member Chris Copeland. (BLE Ex. 8 at 34.)

7. Mr. Copeland, wearing gloves, retrieved the index cards from the bin liner. Board staff member Lisa Leitch photographed each index card. Mr. Copeland secured the index cards in a sealed envelope. (BLE Ex. 8 at 31-32.) The index cards had no indication of whom they belonged to.

8. That afternoon, after finishing the exam, Ms. Sexton wrote and signed an honor pledge asserting, "I have abided by the Texas Bar Exam Security Policy." (BLE Ex. 13 at 109.) In doing so, Ms. Sexton made a false statement to the Board.

¹ At least 21 of the index cards measured 4 × 6 inches in perimeter.

9. After the exam, Mr. Copeland delivered the sealed envelope of index cards to Director of Admissions Mike Sullivan, who submitted the index cards to the Texas Department of Public Safety for latent print analysis.

10. On October 6, the Board released the results of the July 2025 exam, and informed Ms. Sexton that she passed by earning a score of 270 or higher. (BLE Ex. 3.) On that day, Ms. Sexton was licensed to practice law in Texas. (BLE Ex. 4 at 19.)

11. On October 14, shortly after Ms. Sexton was licensed, Texas DPS issued a Friction Ridge Examination Laboratory Report concluding that Ms. Sexton's fingerprint was on one of the index cards. (BLE Ex. 9 at 35.)

12. On October 20, Board staff informed Ms. Sexton that they had embargoed her Uniform Bar Exam score with the National Conference of Bar Examiners pending staff's investigation into Ms. Sexton's possible exam misconduct and, if needed, a hearing before a panel of the Board. (BLE Ex. 5 at 21.) While the score was embargoed, Ms. Sexton could not transfer it to any other UBE jurisdiction.

13. On October 21, 2025, Board staff sent Ms. Sexton the following message:

Dear Jessica Sexton:

In accordance with the notice "Exam score withheld pending investigation" posted to your ATLAS account yesterday, we are investigating your possible exam misconduct.

You took the July 2025 Texas Bar Examination at the San Antonio Shrine Auditorium. Each exam site has a designated Secure Area in which examinees may only bring Required and Permitted Items; Prohibited Items may not be brought into the Secure Area. At the San Antonio Shrine Auditorium, the Secure Area is the entire building after examinees enter the building's exterior doors. A list of Required and Permitted Items, and examples of Prohibited Items, are included in the [Texas Bar Examination General Instructions](#).

Using the "Create Message" button on your ATLAS user home page, please address whether you brought any Prohibited Items into the Secure Area. If so, provide a detailed explanation.

Your response is due **no later than 8:00 a.m. CST on Friday, October 24, 2025.** (BLE Ex. 6 at 22.)

14. On November 2, 2025, Sexton responded, “I absolutely did not bring any prohibited items.” (BLE Ex.17 at 124.) In making this response, Ms. Sexton knowingly made a false statement to the Board.

15. On November 19, 2025, staff sent Ms. Sexton a notice of hearing for December 19, 2025. The next day, Ms. Sexton emailed the following to Dondraius Mayhew, General Counsel for the Board:

I received notice of the upcoming hearing on 12/19 regarding an allegation that I brought prohibited materials into the bar examination. I do not understand from the letter what this is about. In order to prepare for the hearing and respond completely and accurately, may I please have:

1. The specific factual allegations;
2. Any proctor reports;
3. Any vendor reports or ExamSoft/TestingCenter security logs;
4. Any documents the Board intends to rely on.

Thank you very much for your help. I want to ensure I am fully prepared to answer the Board's questions thoroughly and candidly.

Respectfully,

Jessica Sexton

16. On November 24, 2025, Mr. Mayhew provided Ms. Sexton with a draft version of the Board’s hearing exhibits, including the Texas DPS fingerprint report. At that point, Ms. Sexton admitted, “Those were my notes I threw away. I plan to accept responsibility and explain my actions while defending my character overall.” (BLE Ex. 14 at 110.)

17. The December 19 hearing was continued at Ms. Sexton's attorney's request. Staff gave Ms. Sexton proper and timely notice of an April 16, 2026 hearing. (BLE Ex. 2.)

Hearing

18. On April 16, 2026, the Panel heard the matter of Jessica Sexton.

19. The Panel consisted of Board Members W. Stephen "Steve" Benesh, presiding; Harold "Al" Odom; and Carlos R. Soltero. Dondraius Mayhew represented the Board. Ms. Sexton appeared in person and was represented by attorney Tricia Heil Davis.

20. The Panel considered whether Ms. Sexton violated the Texas Bar Exam Security Policy, and if so, whether the Board should recommend that her license be revoked per Rule 17(b).

21. At the hearing, and through a written statement provided as an exhibit, Ms. Sexton testified that when she got dressed the morning of the second exam day, she put on a pair of jeans without realizing the index cards were in a back pocket. She drove to the exam site with the index cards in her back pocket, checked in, entered the Secure Area, went to the restroom, entered a stall, and discovered the index cards. She "immediately knew" she should not have any study materials on her. She knew the restroom was in the Secure Area. She "felt a wave of fear and shame and reacted impulsively." She crumpled the index cards and threw them into the bin.

22. When asked why she did not raise her hand when Ms. Orr read the final warning before the exam, Ms. Sexton said, "I didn't -- I didn't have that thought. I was so shocked when I discovered them and I panicked and crumbled them up and threw them away. And I thought I'm not cheating. I didn't intend to do this. If I throw them away and I don't have them on me, I can go take the exam. It happened very fast." (Hrg. transcript p. 58.)

23. When asked at the hearing why she signed the honor pledge at the end of the exam, she testified that at the time she "felt okay signing it" because she had thrown away the index cards.

24. When asked why, on November 2, after she had been licensed as a Texas attorney, in response to staff's post-exam investigation, she told staff, "I

absolutely did not bring in any prohibited items,” Ms. Sexton testified that she made this false statement because she was scared.

25. In her testimony, Ms. Sexton acknowledged that she only admitted to taking the index cards into the Secure Area after staff presented her with the Texas DPS fingerprint report. She testified, “I was surprised that the notes were recovered and sent off.”

26. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] She also testified that she has sought resources and therapy to “ensure that fear never drives [her] decision making in that way again.” (App. Ex. 13.)

27. Ms. Sexton offered letters of support from lawyers and staff at her firm—including attorney Jean Seaton Brown—from other colleagues, and from her husband. (App. Ex. 1-10.)

28. Ms. Sexton testified that she did not access the notes during the exam, and the Panel finds no evidence that contradicts that testimony.

Conclusions of Law

29. The Panel has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to chapter 82 of the Texas Government Code and the Rules.

30. The evidence reasonably shows that Ms. Sexton violated the Rules by having items in her pocket in the Secure Area and by bringing prohibited items into the Secure Area.

31. The evidence reasonably shows that when Ms. Sexton signed the honor pledge on July 30 attesting, “I have abided by the Texas Bar Exam Security Policy,” she made a fraudulent statement to the Board for the purpose of obtaining a law license.

32. The evidence reasonably shows that on November 2, when Ms. Sexton asserted, “I absolutely did not bring any prohibited items,” she knowingly made a fraudulent statement to the Board for the purpose of retaining her law license.

33. The Panel finds a clear and rational connection between Sexton's lack of candor and dishonesty and the likelihood that, if permitted to retain an unconditional license to practice law at this time, she may harm clients, obstruct the administration of justice, or otherwise violate the rules governing the legal profession.

Orders

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that Ms. Sexton obtained her law license through fraud or by willful failure to comply with the applicable Rules. Accordingly, the Board recommends that her unconditional law license be withdrawn and canceled and that Ms. Sexton be issued a probationary law license for a period of two years from the date of the license, subject to her strict compliance with the following conditions.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Ms. Sexton's UBE score shall no longer be embargoed with the NCBE.

Conditions of Probation

Strict Compliance

Condition 1. Sexton will timely comply with all requirements of this Order.

Questionnaire

Condition 2. Sexton will upload a properly completed Questionnaire to ATLAS, no earlier than three calendar days before and no later than 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the following dates of every year of the probationary license, even if the date falls on a weekend or holiday:

- August 1
- November 1
- March 1
- June 1

General

Condition 3. Sexton will commit no offense against the laws of this State, any other State, or the United States.

Condition 4. Sexton will avoid and not be subject to disciplinary action for the breach of any regulation, rule, or statute governing any profession or activity in which Sexton may be engaged.

Condition 5. Sexton will not engage in any conduct that shows a lack of good moral character or fitness.

Condition 6. Sexton will remain in good standing and on active status with the State Bar of Texas throughout the term of the probationary license.

Condition 7. Sexton will promptly respond to all requests from Board staff for information or documentation.

Duty to Update

Condition 8. Sexton will update ATLAS within 10 days of any change in Sexton's home and work addresses, email addresses, or telephone numbers.

Condition 9. Sexton will inform the Board within 14 days through ATLAS of any arrest, citation, and of any other circumstance that might constitute a breach of the conditions of this Order.

Condition 10. Sexton will inform the Board within 14 days through ATLAS of any notice, complaint, inquiry, referral, or other matter by any disciplinary body involving Sexton's probationary license, even if the matter is dismissed or no disciplinary action is taken.

Request to Renew or Convert

Condition 11. If Sexton seeks to renew the probationary license or convert it to a regular license, then Sexton will:

- 11.1. At least 90 days and no more than 120 days before the expiration of the probationary license, send a message through ATLAS to request a Renewal or Conversion Packet and follow up with Board staff as needed or until the packet has been received; and
- 11.2. At least 60 days before the expiration of the probationary license, upload to ATLAS a properly completed Application for Regular License or Renewal of Probationary License that includes all documents and evidence requested by the Board.

SIGNED this 26 day of May 2026.



Presiding