

ABA Law Connect Project Abandoned



***Summary:** An alternative program for small businesses to be able to afford legal aid has been thrown out after most bar associations strongly fought against it.*

The American Bar Association has given up on a project aimed at helping small business owners find lawyers at a low cost. The pilot project, ABA Law Connect, was introduced last October with Rocket Lawyer but has drawn intense criticism from local and state bar groups.

Avvo Launches Online Legal Services

Rocket Lawyer is a company backed by Google Ventures that uses a mass-market approach to allowing consumers the chance to consult with lawyers and to create legal documents. The program was called by ABA president Paulette Brown an “exciting opportunity” for small businesses to be able to gain access to affordable legal services as all as give lawyer members the chance to help new clients. Small businesses would only have to pay \$4.95 to ask a question online and a follow-up question. Further services could be negotiated between the lawyer and client.

Will Artificial Intelligence Replace Lawyers and Paralegals?

The program was tested out in Pennsylvania, Illinois, and California for three months before being dropped. The state bar associations in Pennsylvania and Illinois fought back against the program because they feared it would take business away from local and state bar referral services, which builds revenue for bar groups, among other reasons.

California did not oppose the program. The State Bar of California executive director Elizabeth Rindskopf Parker said she was impressed after meeting with Rocket Lawyer, “I thought it was exciting that they’re really interested in serving this huge group that is underserved.” However some city bar associations were not a fan of the program.

Ravel Law Offers New Way to Do Legal Research

Rocket Lawyer founder and CEO Charley Moore further explained the programs intentions, “The fact is that a majority of American individuals and small businesses are priced out of legal representation. At the same time, many lawyers are underutilized. ABA Law Connect came about as a way for the American Bar Association to experiment with modern technology as a way to resolve this paradox.”

Rocket Lawyer and other related companies that are changing the face of the profession will continue to build new resources for the public to utilize. Many lawyers and bar groups oppose these types of companies because they threaten revenues but the others hope these alternative providers will address the need for civil legal services for those that don’t qualify for free legal aid but can’t afford services on their own.

Source: <http://www.americanlawyer.com/id=1202750047215/ABA-Abandons-Rocket-Lawyer-Venture-Amid-Attorney-Backlash>

Photo: startupsavant.com