

**Arizona Supreme Court**  
**State Bar Petition for Review Admission by Motion**

**SB-24-0023-PR**

**In the Matter of SMRUTI S. BALI**

**Appellate Case Information**

Case Filed: 24-Apr-2024  
Case Closed: 28-Jun-2024

**Dept/Composition**

**Side 1. In the Matter of SMRUTI S. BALI, Applicant**  
**(Litigant Group) In the Matter of SMRUTI S. BALI**

● Smruti S. Bali PRO SE

**(Litigant Group) COMMITTEE ON CHARACTER AND FITNESS**

● Committee on Character and Fitness

**Attorneys for: Committee on Character and Fitness**  
James B Morse, Jr., Esq. (AZ Bar No. 19915)

**CASE STATUS**

Jun 28, 2024....Case Closed

Jun 28, 2024....Decision Rendered

**CASE DECISION**

**28-Jun-2024 ORDER**

\* Applicant Smruti S. Bali seeks a waiver of the requirement in Rule 34(b)(1)(d), Rules of the Supreme Court, that an applicant hold a juris doctor ("JD") degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association ("ABA") in order to sit for the

Filed: 28-Jun-2024 Mandate:

Decision Disposition

**Denied**

**Robert Brutinel**

**8 PROCEEDING ENTRIES**

1. 24-Apr-2024 FILED: (Replaced by Amended Petition Filed 04/29/2024) Verified Petition for Review; Certificate of Service; Certificate of Compliance (Petitioner Bali, Pro Se)
2. 29-Apr-2024 FILED: (Replaced by Second Amended Petition Filed 05/13/2024) Amended Petition for Review; Certificate of Service; Certificate of Compliance (Petitioner Bali, Pro Se)
3. 8-May-2024 FILED: (Replaced by Response Filed 05/23/2024) Response to Amended Verified Petition for Review; Certificate of Service (Committee on Character and Fitness)
4. 12-May-2024 FILED: (STRICKEN Per ASC Order Filed 05/13/2024) Reply to Response to Amended Verified Petition for Review; Certificate of Service; Certificate of Compliance (Petitioner Bali, Pro Se)
5. 13-May-2024 On April 24, 2024, Petitioner Smruti S. Bali filed her Verified Petition for Review, and, on April 29, 2024, an Amended Petition for Review. The Committee on Character and Fitness filed a Response to Amended Verified Petition for Review on May 8, 2024. On May 12, 2024, Petitioner filed a Reply to Response to Amended Verified Petition for Review presenting, for the first time, new information and an email dated May 11, 2024, which was after she filed her Amended Verified Petition for Review.  
  
Pursuant to Rule 39(h)(1), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., "No reply in support of the petition for review may be filed" unless ordered by this Court sua sponte. Therefore,  
  
IT IS ORDERED striking the reply without prejudice to filing a Second Amended Verified Petition for Review. The Second Amended Verified Petition for Review is due no later than June 5, 2024. Petitioner should include in the Second Amended Verified Petition for Review all the information she wishes this Court to consider.  
  
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED if a timely Second Amended Verified Petition for Review is filed, the Committee may file a response. If no timely Second Amended Verified Petition for Review is filed, the Court will consider only the information included in the April 29, 2024 Amended Petition for Review. (Hon. John R. Lopez IV)
6. 13-May-2024 FILED: Second Amended Verified Petition for Review; Certificate of Service; Certificate of Compliance (Petitioner Bali, Pro Se)
7. 23-May-2024 FILED: Response to Second Amended Verified Petition for Review; Certificate of Service (Committee on Character and Fitness)

**Arizona Supreme Court**  
**State Bar Petition for Review Admission by Motion**

**SB-24-0023-PR**

**In the Matter of SMRUTI S. BALI**

**8 PROCEEDING ENTRIES**

8. 28-Jun-2024 Applicant Smruti S. Bali seeks a waiver of the requirement in Rule 34(b)(1)(d), Rules of the Supreme Court, that an applicant hold a juris doctor ("JD") degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association ("ABA") in order to sit for the Arizona bar examination. If unsuccessful, Applicant seeks a full refund of her application fee.

Applicant's Verified Amended Petition for Review was filed April 29, 2024. The Committee filed a response, and Applicant filed a reply. On May 13, 2024, the Court struck the reply without prejudice to filing a Second Amended Verified Petition for Review. Applicant filed a Second Amended Verified Petition and the Committee has filed a Response.

This Court has "on occasion, granted waivers to graduates of foreign schools in part because such schools have no method to obtain accreditation nor is there any way for citizens of foreign countries to attend an ABA-accredited school in their own country." Application of Macartney, 163 Ariz. 116, 118 (1990). This Court has also observed: An applicant who has graduated from a law school in the English speaking world with a common law tradition should be permitted to apply for examination and admission when the applicant shows that in addition to other requirements as set forth in the Rule, that the law school from which he graduated is the equivalent of a law school approved by the American Bar Association. Of course, it is the responsibility of the applicant to convince us that the law school from which he has graduated possesses the high standards required by the American Bar Association. Application of Schlittner, 146 Ariz. 198, 200 (1985).

Applicant advises, "I am a graduate with LLB which is an equivalent of JD." (Second Amended Petition at 5). However, other than transcripts, Applicant provides no information to support her contention that a three-year Bachelor of Law (LL.B.) is the equivalent of a graduate JD degree from an ABA-accredited law school. Similarly, although the transcripts from Cardozo School of Law reflect a one-year graduate program, Applicant provides no information to establish that her LL.B. plus a one-year masters' program is the equivalent of a graduate JD from an ABA-accredited law school. Likewise, Applicant advises that she has practiced law in India "in good standing," but provides no specific information explaining the substance of her practice, where she was employed or when. Likewise, she contends she "worked in a law firm in NY as an intern, associate lawyer, and pro bono associate for about two and a half years before moving to Arizona," again, without explaining the substance of her practice, where she was employed, or when.

In Schlittner, the applicant included a letter from a professor certifying that the legal education was "substantially equivalent to the legal education a person received at a law school approved by the American Bar Association." Other applicants have submitted letters substantiating an applicants' work history and experience.

IT IS ORDERED that the Applicant's petition is denied without prejudice to her reapplying for a waiver if she submits more information about her legal practice experience and how her legal education is the equivalent to graduating with a juris doctor from an ABA-accredited law school.

As to the request for a refund, Applicant advises that she submitted her \$580.00 payment on March 21, 2024 for the July 2024 bar examination, and then on March 28, 2024 requested that the payment be applied to a later writing, which was before the deadline. The Admissions website advises that "Fees are set by Ariz. Sup. Ct. Admin. Order No. 2011-141 (now 2024-78) and are not discretionary. There are no hardship allowances." It was the Applicant who has initiated the application process, and the fee is required whether applicants are successful in their application or not. Therefore,

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the \$580.00 paid March 21, 2024 be applied to the February 2025 bar examination. The fee will not be transferred to any other writing and no refund will be issued.  
(Hon. Robert Brutinel)

---