

MINNESOTA SAINT PAUL LEGAL LEDGER LAWYER  
ATTORNEYS  
OF THE YEAR 2024

## PETITION TO ADOPT PARENTAL LEAVE RULES

*m boulette of Taft; Jessica Klander of Bassford Remele; Sarah Soucie Eyberg of the  
Minnesota State Bar Association*

**I**t's no secret that attorneys are their own worst enemies when it comes to work-life balance. After the release of a report from the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being showing how bad it really was, the Minnesota State Bar Association decided to take action.

In 2020, the MSBA formed a committee to study parental leave continuance rules in appropriate circumstances, spearheaded by Bassford Remele's Jessica Klander, Taft's m boulette and Sarah Soucie Eyberg of the Minnesota State Bar Association.

Klander, boulette and Soucie had personal experience with the situation. boulette had written an article about their third child's birth being the first time they'd been able to obtain parental leave continuances. Soucie Eyeberg is a solo practitioner and a mother of three.

For Klander, previous pregnancy losses made her reluctant to talk about a birth plan too early with either opposing counsel or the court when she was pregnant. But she didn't have any choice.

"I knew that trial was set to happen at the same time as I was going to give birth," she said. "There was no process for relief for me."

After the MSBA as a whole adopted the committee's recommendation – broadening it to include not just pregnancy, but care-giving, illness, and death of a loved one – Klander argued for the rule in front of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Today, a two-year pilot program is underway to measure the rules' effectiveness. Klander was surprised that there was opposition to the program as the committee worked.

"There was a vocal minority that was afraid people would game the system, abuse [it] or that it just wasn't needed," she said. "All evidence so far has been to the contrary."

"It's about bringing humanity to court procedures. Before, there wasn't a clear path. There wasn't a way to say, 'I just need a minute to tend to my life.'"



**JESSICA KLANDER**