

Law School Lawsuits Mounting: Was Their Jobs Outlook Too Rosy?

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For law students hoping that their legal degree would be the ticket to steady, high-paying jobs, the reality of the [current economy](#) is understandably disappointing. But are law schools to blame?

According to a growing number of class-action lawsuits, many believe the answer is yes. In February, [twelve law schools were slapped with class-action lawsuits by former students](#). At a press conference held on March 15, lawyers announced that [twenty additional schools](#) would be sued this spring.

Despite their growing number, the merits of these lawsuits are still up for debate. The aggrieved law school graduates argue that they were duped by the school's positive job placement data, which, in many cases, indicated recent graduate employment rates upwards of 90 percent. According to the complaints, these alleged overstatements left recent graduates with useless degrees and enormous debt.

Meanwhile, the law schools argue that they complied with industry standards for reporting job data and never promised law students they would be gainfully employed after graduation. In a recent hearing on a motion to dismiss, an attorney for [New York Law School](#) noted, "Success in the law takes time."

As reported in the [National Law Journal](#), New York Supreme Court Judge Melvin Schweitzer, who presided over the hearing, seemed to question the arguments raised by both sides. With respect to the students, the judge questioned why the economic downturn should not be viewed as a superseding factor and how the students planned to calculate the alleged decreased value of their law degrees.

New York Law School's arguments for dismissal were also met with skepticism. The fact that the school complied with the [American Bar Association](#)'s reporting procedures was not a complete defense, the judge stated. He specifically highlighted that the ABA is a private association and not a government agency.

The case against New York Law School is being closely watched as it is the first to enter the courtroom. As such, it may set the standard for later lawsuits.

Whether or not they are ultimately successful, the lawsuits have put a spotlight on the issue of job placement and may ultimately force law schools to be more transparent. The issue has already gained the attention of the media, the legal community, and the politicians in Washington.

The ABA is considering a rule change that would require law schools to disclose more detailed information about graduate job placement. Last year, Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla. , asked the [Department of Education](#) to investigate the “job placement rates of American law school graduates; indicating whether such jobs are full- or part-time positions, whether they require a law degree, and whether they were maintained a year after