

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, FAMILY JUSTICE & GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY

A comprehensive systems-research framework for lawyer regulation, child- and family-impact safeguards, transparent enforcement, independent review, and accountable public institutions.

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A Comprehensive Professional-Ethics Refresh for Lawyers: Protecting Children, Families, and the Integrity of Government

Executive Summary

The strongest path to a meaningful professional-ethics “refresh” is **not one sweeping statute aimed at every lawyer**. American lawyer regulation is fragmented by design: state supreme courts control admission and professional discipline in their jurisdictions; legislatures control substantive and procedural statutes within constitutional limits; judges are governed by separate judicial-conduct systems; prosecutors combine professional obligations with unusually broad executive discretion; and federal government lawyers operate inside an additional layer of DOJ rules, Office of Professional Responsibility review, federal-court rules, and state-bar obligations. Maine’s Supreme Judicial Court expressly describes itself as responsible for admitting lawyers and regulating the conduct of lawyers and judges. ¹

That fragmentation sounds like an obstacle. Strategically, it is an advantage: **reform can be attacked simultaneously through several independent lanes**. A legislature cannot safely dictate every detail of lawyer discipline to the judiciary, but it can change family-law procedure, transparency requirements, data collection, fee shifting, review standards, governmental-opinion publication, and child-protection safeguards. At the same time, a state supreme court can amend professional-conduct rules, mandate education, strengthen disciplinary reporting, and create family-law-specific ethical duties. Federal law can address federal attorneys and agency transparency. Bar regulators can adopt preventive regulation rather than waiting until misconduct has already hurt someone. ²

The most important Maine-specific finding is also a correction to one premise of the earlier reform argument: **Maine does not need to copy Texas to obtain an explicit separation-of-powers clause. Maine already has one**. Article III divides power into legislative, executive, and judicial departments and says a person belonging to one department may not exercise powers properly belonging to another except where the Constitution expressly permits it. The Maine Law Court has described Maine’s separation doctrine as **more rigorous than its federal counterpart**. *In re Dunleavy*, 2003 ME 124, relying on *State v. Hunter*, 447 A.2d 797 (Me. 1982). ³

That changes the recommended strategy. In Maine, the higher-value demand is not “write a Texas-style clause.” It is:

Make existing constitutional separation enforceable through transparent procedures, defined standards, independent review, and ethics rules that prevent lawyers from converting delegated discretion into unaccountable power.

The second major finding is that Maine’s existing ethics rules already contain much of the vocabulary needed for reform. Lawyers must expedite litigation consistent with client interests; may not knowingly

mislead tribunals; may not unlawfully obstruct evidence; may not use means whose substantial purpose is merely to embarrass, delay, or burden a third person; and may be disciplined for dishonesty or conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice. Prosecutors have additional obligations under Rule 3.8. The weakness is therefore not simply an absence of ethical language. It is the **lack of child/family-specific operational standards, preventive regulation, transparent enforcement data, and measurable consequences for conflict-generating litigation conduct.** [Maine Rules of Professional Conduct.](#) ⁴

The clinical evidence supports reform, but it also requires precision. The strongest evidence does **not** establish that “divorce” or “lawyers” alone cause children’s psychological harm. It establishes that persistent interparental conflict, triangulation, loyalty conflicts, hostile parenting, instability, and some forms of high-conflict separation are associated with worse child outcomes. A 2020 meta-analysis covering **115 samples and 24,854 divorced families** found significant relationships among interparental conflict, parenting processes, and child psychosocial adjustment, generally with small effects, and found several parenting processes mediated the conflict-adjustment relationship. ⁵

That distinction matters. A serious reform movement should not try to turn contested concepts such as “parental alienation” into automatic legal presumptions. Research on legally contested families shows that contact, conflict, parenting quality, safety, and child adjustment interact in complex ways. The better ethics standard is therefore **child-impact, evidence, proportionality, and anti-triangulation**, not allegiance to a particular custody ideology. ⁶

The third major finding is that prosecutorial discretion is indeed difficult to challenge, but describing it as completely “unreviewable” overstates the law. In *Heckler v. Chaney*, the Supreme Court created a **presumption** that an agency’s refusal to institute enforcement proceedings is committed to agency discretion under the Administrative Procedure Act. *Wayte v. United States* emphasized broad prosecutorial discretion but held selective prosecution remains constrained by constitutional protections. *United States v. Armstrong* then imposed an exceptionally demanding threshold for obtaining discovery on a race-based selective-prosecution claim, requiring evidence concerning similarly situated persons. Those doctrines create a formidable accountability problem without literally placing every enforcement decision beyond law. [Heckler](#), [Wayte](#), [Armstrong](#). ⁷

The most practical reform package is therefore a **multi-track Maine pilot capable of national replication:**

1. petition the Maine Supreme Judicial Court for a child/family-impact professional-conduct rule and mandatory recurring ethics education;
2. enact family-procedure legislation aimed at unnecessary delay, abusive litigation cost, evidence obstruction, child triangulation, and prompt review of parent-child contact restrictions;
3. require aggregated disciplinary, family-court, GAL, delay, sanction, and fee data;
4. create a government legal-opinion register with publication or a stated legal basis for withholding;
5. strengthen independent legislative legal capacity that Maine already possesses through its nonpartisan Revisor, OPLA, and fiscal staff;
6. distinguish legitimate appeals from genuine judicial misconduct and demand transparent judicial-conduct statistics;
7. build an ABA/model-rule campaign so the reform can spread through state supreme courts nationally;

8. pursue narrow federal reforms concerning DOJ ethics, OLC transparency, and categorical non-enforcement policies rather than attempting to make individual charging decisions judicially dictated. ⁸

This report addresses institutional reform and lawful advocacy, not legal advice in an individual case.

The Doctrinal Landscape: Where Legal Power Is Actually Protected

The essential reform task is to separate several doctrines that are often collapsed into the phrase “lawyer immunity.” They are different, and each requires a different remedy.

Prosecutorial discretion concerns whether and how the executive enforces the law. **Selective prosecution doctrine** sets the constitutional threshold for proving that prosecutorial choices unlawfully discriminate. **Prosecutorial immunity** determines when prosecutors may be personally sued for damages. **Professional discipline** is a separate licensing mechanism. **Agency non-enforcement review** involves administrative-law doctrines. None of these is identical to the others. ⁹

In *Wayte v. United States*, 470 U.S. 598 (1985), the Supreme Court emphasized that prosecutors must consider factors such as enforcement priorities, strength of cases, deterrence, and resource allocation, considerations courts are poorly positioned to second-guess. But the Court did not say prosecutorial choices are constitution-free. It analyzed Wayte's selective-prosecution challenge using equal-protection principles requiring discriminatory effect and discriminatory purpose. [Primary opinion](#). ¹⁰

In *United States v. Armstrong*, 517 U.S. 456 (1996), the Court made such claims substantially harder to investigate. For discovery on a race-based selective-prosecution claim, defendants had to come forward with evidence tending to show both discriminatory effect and discriminatory intent, including evidence that similarly situated persons of other races were not prosecuted. The underlying logic includes a presumption of regularity in prosecutorial decision-making. [Primary opinion](#). ¹¹

In *Heckler v. Chaney*, 470 U.S. 821 (1985), death-row prisoners sought review of the FDA's refusal to take enforcement action concerning drugs used in executions. The Court held that agency non-enforcement decisions are presumptively committed to agency discretion under APA §701(a)(2). Crucially, that is a **presumption**, rooted partly in the absence of manageable standards and the allocation of enforcement resources; *Heckler* did not announce an unlimited executive power to suspend statutes. [Primary opinion](#). ¹²

The reform implication is important: Congress need not attempt the constitutionally fraught step of letting courts order prosecutors to charge named individuals. A more defensible legislative target would be **categorical non-enforcement policies based on legal interpretations**—for example, requiring public reasons and permitting review when an agency announces that an entire statutory category will not be enforced because the agency believes the statute invalid or outside its authority. That directly addresses the policy-law boundary while preserving ordinary case-specific discretion. That proposal is an inference from the distinction underlying *Heckler*, not a statement of current law. ¹²

A separate doctrine, *Imbler v. Pachtman*, 424 U.S. 409 (1976), gives prosecutors absolute immunity from §1983 damages for functions intimately associated with the judicial phase of the criminal process. That enormously constrains one avenue of personal civil liability. It does **not** transform prosecutorial conduct

into ethically permissible conduct, erase appellate remedies, or itself abolish professional discipline.

[Primary opinion.](#) ¹³

That distinction should become part of the public message:

Immunity from a damages lawsuit is not ethical approval. Discretion is not ownership of the law. And deference is not a license for dishonesty, discrimination, or bad faith.

At the federal level, DOJ's Office of Professional Responsibility is supposed to investigate professional misconduct by DOJ attorneys arising from their investigative, litigation, and legal-advice functions. OPR accepts allegations from courts, Congress, attorneys, litigants, agencies, citizens, media reports, and its own review. But DOJ also states that OPR generally refrains from investigating allegations that have been, or could have been, presented to a court during pending litigation. That division between litigation remedies and internal discipline deserves scrutiny because conduct can be litigation-relevant and professionally significant at the same time. [DOJ OPR complaint information.](#) ¹⁴

DOJ itself recognizes the importance of state professional rules through its Professional Responsibility Advisory Office, which trains and advises federal attorneys regarding **28 U.S.C. §530B**, the federal statute addressing state ethics rules for federal government lawyers. That makes state professional regulation a genuine federal-accountability lane rather than merely a state concern. ¹⁵

That lane became unusually visible in 2026. DOJ proposed a process under which state disciplinary bodies would be asked to suspend investigative activity involving DOJ attorneys while DOJ conducted internal review. On April 7, 2026, the Maine Supreme Judicial Court publicly opposed the proposal as interfering with the Court's authority and responsibility to address professional-conduct complaints against DOJ lawyers admitted in Maine. That episode is powerful evidence for reform advocates: **state supreme courts regard independent professional regulation of government lawyers as part of their institutional responsibility.** ¹⁶

I located the 2026 proposal and official Maine response, but not a final Federal Register rule resolving that proposal in the materials returned during this research. Accordingly, it should be described as a **2026 proposed policy and ongoing institutional conflict**, not represented here as a final nationwide rule. ¹⁷

Government lawyers as repeat institutional actors

The Office of Legal Counsel is structurally important because it provides legal advice to the President and executive agencies, reviews proposed executive orders and substantive proclamations for form and legality, and comments on pending legislation. DOJ says selected OLC opinions are published when the Office determines publication appropriate; OLC also maintains an electronic reading room. [OLC Opinions.](#) ¹⁸

That is different from saying every consequential OLC opinion is automatically public. In 2025, the D.C. Circuit rejected a theory that OLC opinions categorically constitute the type of "final opinions" that FOIA automatically requires agencies to place in their reading rooms merely because executive-branch practice often treats OLC advice as authoritative. That makes **legislation establishing an OLC opinion index and publication presumption** materially stronger than relying on FOIA doctrine alone. ¹⁹

The Office of the Solicitor General provides another example of concentrated institutional advocacy. DOJ's current description says the United States participates in **approximately two-thirds of the Supreme Court's merits cases each year**, and the Solicitor General determines when the United States will seek Supreme Court review and what position it will take there. Empirical research has found a distinct advantage associated with Solicitor General participation even after attempts to account for case selection and advocate characteristics. ²⁰

That warrants concern about repeat-player influence, but the rhetoric should remain accurate. The Solicitor General is **not literally a legislator or judge**, and executive lawyers do not decide Supreme Court cases. The more defensible argument is that an extraordinarily frequent and institutionally sophisticated litigant can exert sustained influence over constitutional development. ²⁰

I would therefore remove the earlier unsupported "76% participation / 89% victory" formulation unless its specific dataset and methodology are cited. The present official OSG source supports approximately **two-thirds participation in merits cases**, while peer-reviewed scholarship supports a substantial SG advantage; that is already enough to establish institutional influence without overstating the evidence. ²⁰

Maine: The Strongest Immediate Reform Laboratory

Maine is unusually well positioned for this project because much of the constitutional and institutional machinery already exists.

Article III of the Maine Constitution divides government into legislative, executive, and judicial departments and expressly prohibits one department's actors from exercising powers properly belonging to another, except where the Constitution itself permits it. *In re Dunleavy* quoted *State v. Hunter* for the proposition that Maine applies separation of powers more rigorously than the federal system. [Maine Constitution Art. III text](#) and *In re Dunleavy*, 2003 ME 124. ²¹

The Law Court has also connected separation of powers to the judiciary's inherent authority over lawyers. *Board of Overseers of the Bar v. Lee*, 422 A.2d 998 (Me. 1980), reasoned from the coequal character of Maine's branches to the judiciary's inherent power to carry out functions necessary to the judicial department. [Case text](#). ²²

That creates a major drafting constraint: **the Legislature should not simply enact its own disciplinary code and order the judiciary to enforce it against lawyers**. A safer and politically stronger package divides responsibilities. The Legislature changes substantive family law, court procedure where constitutionally permissible, transparency statutes, appropriations, data requirements, and public-agency duties; simultaneously, reformers petition the SJC to amend the Rules of Professional Conduct and Bar Rules. ²³

There is a concrete public pathway. The SJC periodically requests public comments on proposed Bar Rule changes, and its 2025 notice explicitly stated that a person **need not be an attorney** to submit comments. The Advisory Committee on the Rules of Professional Conduct exists to study and recommend rule improvements. That means a citizen-led ethics proposal is not conceptually outside the existing process. ²⁴

What Maine's existing lawyer rules already prohibit

Maine's professional rules are stronger than the public debate sometimes assumes. Rule 3.2 requires reasonable efforts to expedite litigation consistent with client interests. Rule 3.3 imposes duties of candor toward tribunals. Rule 3.4 addresses fairness to opposing parties and counsel, including evidence obstruction. Rule 4.4 prohibits using means that have no substantial purpose other than to embarrass, delay, or burden a third person. Rule 8.4 reaches dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, and conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice. Rule 8.3 establishes reporting obligations for serious professional misconduct. Prosecutors receive special obligations under Rule 3.8. ⁴

The Rules themselves caution against reducing ethics to a game of technical compliance: their preamble states that professional rules do not exhaust the moral and ethical considerations that should inform a lawyer. At the same time, the Rules generally operate through disciplinary processes and do not automatically create civil causes of action. That distinction explains why **better rules without better enforcement data may produce little visible change.** ²⁵

Maine's Board of Overseers is an independent agency under the jurisdiction of the SJC. The Board receives and investigates grievances; Bar Counsel investigates alleged violations; the Grievance Commission participates in the disciplinary process; and public disciplinary proceedings can result in reprimand, suspension, or disbarment. ²⁶

But Maine's Bar Rules also illustrate an accountability problem worth debating. A dismissal with warning is not treated as professional discipline, the warning is not reported as discipline, and the complainant cannot appeal the warning. Certain complaint records are eventually expunged while other disciplinary records are retained. None of that is inherently illegitimate—confidential screening can protect lawyers from meritless allegations—but the structure strengthens the case for **aggregate transparency about what enters and exits the system.** ²⁷

What Maine's data show

The ABA's latest nationwide Survey on Lawyer Discipline Systems available in this research is its 2023 survey, published in the survey materials in 2025. It is the ABA's national compilation of disciplinary-agency caseload, sanctions, staffing, and budget data and was sent to 56 disciplinary agencies. The survey itself warns about missing data and jurisdictional differences, so comparisons should not be treated like standardized performance rankings. ²⁸

For Maine, the ABA reported **5,335 active lawyers and 406 complaints received** in 2023. It also reported **20 lawyers publicly disciplined** and **10 receiving private/non-public sanctions**. These are annual system snapshots, not a cohort study: one must not say that 20 of those exact 406 complaints produced public discipline, because sanctions in a given year may concern complaints initiated earlier and one lawyer can have multiple matters. ²⁹

Maine lawyer-regulation snapshot	Reported count	Approximate rate per 1,000 active lawyers
Active lawyers	5,335	—
Complaints received	406	76.1

Maine lawyer-regulation snapshot	Reported count	Approximate rate per 1,000 active lawyers
Lawyers publicly disciplined	20	3.75
Private/non-public sanctions	10	1.87

Derived from ABA 2023 S.O.L.D.; rates are descriptive only and should not be interpreted as complaint-to-sanction conversion rates. ²⁹

The larger transparency problem is national. Jurisdictions classify warnings, diversion, admonitions, private sanctions, complaints, and case closures differently, and numerous agencies had not provided complete data by the ABA publication date. A national “ethics refresh” should therefore include a **uniform disciplinary-data standard**: complaints received, practice area, allegation category, screening outcome, investigation duration, public/private disposition, sanctions, recurrence, and whether misconduct involved a child-related proceeding—reported without exposing clients or minors. ²⁹

Judicial ethics require a different lane

Maine judges are governed by the Maine Code of Judicial Conduct, not simply the lawyer grievance process. The Code requires independence, integrity and impartiality; faithful and competent application of law; diligence; a right to be heard; limits on ex parte contacts; and patient, dignified, courteous conduct. It also requires judges to demand appropriate conduct from lawyers and court personnel. [Maine Code of Judicial Conduct](#). ³⁰

A credible reform campaign must distinguish **judicial error from judicial misconduct**. The Code itself indicates that legal error ordinarily is not discipline unless it involves willful or repeated disregard of explicit law. The correct remedy for an adverse or legally erroneous decision is generally preservation of the issue and appellate review; the ethics process is for bias, improper contacts, abuse, dishonesty, serious delay, repeated disregard, and comparable conduct. That distinction protects both accountability and judicial independence. ³¹

Maine's Committee on Judicial Conduct investigates judicial-ethics complaints and reports to the SJC. Statutory authority expressly gives the SJC power to prescribe rules for the committee. This is another reason legislative reform should seek **data, resources and procedural safeguards while asking the SJC itself to tighten judicial ethics standards**, rather than trying to create legislative control over individual judges. ³²

Family law already contains a reform mandate

Maine law is especially useful because Title 19-A already states policy favoring mediated resolutions of family disputes where appropriate and requires parental-rights decisions to turn on the child's best interests, with the child's safety and well-being primary. The statute identifies numerous factors involving relationships, stability, cooperation, abuse, domestic violence, and psychological welfare. [19-A M.R.S. §1653](#). ³³

Section 1653 also creates a mechanism to bring violations of parental-rights and contact orders before the court and permits contempt remedies. That existing structure means reform does not have to invent the

proposition that children require timely enforcement; legislators can focus instead on **deadlines, written findings, expedited hearings, proportional remedies and measurable compliance.** ³⁴

Guardians ad litem may be appointed where child welfare raises special concern, and contentiousness is relevant to appointment. Maine's Judicial Branch notes that in family matters the parties generally bear GAL costs and that GAL fees can be similar to attorney fees. That is direct institutional evidence that extended litigation can create an additional financial burden even before broader socioeconomic consequences are considered. [19-A M.R.S. §1507](#); [Maine Judicial Branch GAL information.](#) ³⁵

Transparency reforms in family court must nevertheless protect children. Maine currently limits remote public access to some electronic court materials even while expanding eCourts access. The better reform is therefore **aggregate system transparency—not publication of children's allegations, treatment records, addresses, school information, or intimate family records.** ³⁶

What Clinical Evidence Supports—and What It Does Not

An ethics-reform campaign will be far harder to dismiss if its scientific claims are narrower than its moral argument.

The strongest clinical proposition is that **persistent interparental conflict matters.** The 2020 meta-analysis of 115 samples and 24,854 divorced families found significant relationships among interparental conflict, parenting patterns, and children's psychosocial adjustment. Parental support, hostility, structuring, intrusiveness, and role diffusion helped explain the association between conflict and internalizing/externalizing problems. Effects were generally small, which is important: the science supports risk, not deterministic predictions about individual children. [PubMed PMID 32512420.](#) ⁵

Longitudinal work likewise indicates that coparenting conflict can predict parental negativity and adolescent maladjustment beyond broader measures of marital quality and disagreement, although effects vary by child, family context, and outcome. [PubMed PMID 21874069.](#) ³⁷

Research specifically involving **high legal conflict** reinforces the need for nuance. One study of divorcing families in high legal conflict found that child mental-health outcomes were associated with parenting quality and contextual factors rather than supporting a simplistic rule that more or less contact is inherently better in every high-conflict case. Another study of parents litigating contact found elevated behavioral problems among children but no simple relationship between amount of contact and child adjustment. ³⁸

That is why a professional rule should not tell lawyers or courts to maximize contact at all costs or minimize it whenever conflict exists. It should demand **credible evidence, individual assessment, safety-sensitive decision-making and avoidance of unnecessary conflict.** Maine's existing best-interest statute is already compatible with that approach. ³⁹

A particularly relevant mechanism is **triangulation**—placing children within the parents' conflict or loyalty contest. A 2022 longitudinal study found that greater post-divorce triangulation was indirectly associated with increases in child adjustment problems through loyalty conflict and reduced self-esteem. That finding maps directly onto an ethics rule preventing lawyers from unnecessarily using children as messengers, strategic witnesses, leverage, or instruments of parental conflict. [PubMed PMID 35771503.](#) ⁴⁰

Research also finds that severe conflict and separation can coexist with child maltreatment, but causation must not be casually inferred. A 2022 study involving professional reports of suspected maltreatment found substantial co-occurrence between separation, conflict, and maltreatment; the appropriate lesson is to **screen carefully for abuse rather than assume every contact problem is litigation manipulation or every allegation is true or false.** [PubMed PMID 36154718](#). ⁴¹

Similarly, divorce itself is not a uniform clinical injury. Longitudinal studies have found modest average associations with some emotional, behavioral, school, or well-being outcomes, while other work shows substantial heterogeneity and confounding by preexisting family risk. Some children are resilient. [PubMed PMID 16291507](#); [PubMed PMID 29051699](#); [PubMed PMID 16496215](#). ⁴²

The APA itself recognizes the unusually contentious and potentially harmful environment surrounding custody evaluation. Its custody-evaluation guidance emphasizes impartiality, professional boundaries and the risks created by conflicts of interest in emotionally charged family-law disputes. In 2024 APA separately approved updated guidelines for psychological evaluations in child-protection matters, emphasizing evidence-informed assessment of actual or threatened harm. ⁴³

APA has also established a working group specifically to review scientific literature concerning **high-conflict family relationships involving children**, drawing expertise from trauma, child abuse, forensic psychology, family law, assessment, research methods, attachment and related disciplines. That ongoing effort is itself a reason legislators should avoid codifying scientifically disputed labels as legal shortcuts. ⁴⁴

Accordingly, I would frame “alienation” reform this way:

Protect children from intentional interference with safe parent-child relationships when supported by evidence—but use the broader concept of parent-child contact problems and require courts to assess competing explanations, including abuse, fear, developmental factors, parenting quality, coercive control, loyalty conflict, and deliberate interference.

That formulation follows the complexity reflected in the available contact, conflict, and high-conflict-family literature rather than assuming one explanation in advance. ⁴⁵

The economic evidence directly tying **lawyer adversarial conduct itself** to later clinical outcomes is much thinner than the conflict literature. The reform case should admit that rather than manufacture certainty. Maine's own materials establish concrete litigation costs such as party-funded GAL fees, while the psychological evidence strongly supports reducing chronic conflict and triangulation. Those are two separate evidentiary propositions. ⁴⁶

Reform Levers Compared

Reform lever	What it can accomplish	Principal advantages	Principal drawbacks / legal obstacles	Implementation path	Key stakeholders
Professional-conduct rule change	Add family-system duties concerning unnecessary delay, disproportionate burden, child triangulation, evidence integrity and conflict escalation	Directly reaches lawyers; enforceable through licensing; can apply without proving civil liability	Maine SJC has core authority over attorney regulation; vague “best interests” duties could conflict with lawyer’s duty to client; must preserve safety advocacy and constitutional petition rights	Petition SJC and Advisory Committee; public comments; hearings; pilot guidance; enforcement metrics	SJC, Advisory Committee, Board of Overseers, family bar, public members, child clinicians
Mandatory recurring ethics/CLE refresh	Require trauma-informed family-law ethics, candor, domestic-violence competence, child development, high-conflict dynamics and proportionality	Preventive rather than punitive; easier to enact than new misconduct category	Training alone becomes checkbox compliance without audits or enforcement	SJC/Board licensing rule; recurring module for domestic-relations practitioners and enhanced prosecutor/government-lawyer tracks	SJC, Board, bar, psychologists, social workers, DV experts
Family-law procedural statute	Expedited review, findings for restrictions, proportional discovery, anti-delay sanctions, prompt enforcement, fee shifting for bad faith	Legislature clearly controls substantive family policy; produces measurable changes	Must avoid infringing core judicial functions; sanctions cannot chill good-faith abuse allegations or defenses	Amend Title 19-A; define standards; require data collection and evaluation	Legislature, courts, parents, GALs, child advocates

Reform lever	What it can accomplish	Principal advantages	Principal drawbacks / legal obstacles	Implementation path	Key stakeholders
Disciplinary transparency	Publish aggregate complaint/disposition/delay/practice-area data and recurrence metrics	Makes enforcement measurable without exposing clients	Confidentiality, due process and reputational concerns; categories must be standardized	SJC Bar Rule + annual statutory reporting for nonconfidential administrative data	Board, SJC, Legislature, public
Government legal-opinion register	Public index of significant OLC/AG/agency legal opinions, publication status and withholding basis	Makes "secret law" harder; preserves an audit trail even when text is privileged	Attorney-client privilege, classified information, deliberative process, ongoing litigation	Statute requiring metadata register plus publication presumption and enumerated withholding grounds	Congress, Maine Legislature, DOJ, AG, agencies
Narrow restoration of judicial review	Review categorical agency non-enforcement based on legal interpretations	Targets de facto policy suspension without making judges prosecutors	Article II/ separation concerns; standing; APA §701(a)(2); courts must not supervise everyday charging	Amend APA/ state analogues narrowly; require written categorical policies and legal basis	Congress, courts, agencies, AGs
Independent legislative counsel	Reduce dependence on executive lawyers when drafting and evaluating policy	Reinforces institutional separation and independent constitutional analysis	Requires staffing and funding; Maine already has much of the structure	Strengthen Maine Revisor/ OPLA/OFP independence, resources and constitutional-review capacity	Legislature, Legislative Council, nonpartisan staff

Reform lever	What it can accomplish	Principal advantages	Principal drawbacks / legal obstacles	Implementation path	Key stakeholders
Constitutional amendment	Could explicitly entrench structural separation at federal level	Highest-order legal statement	Extremely difficult; overbroad text could generate unintended litigation; Maine already has explicit language	Reserve for federal long-term movement; do not make it Maine's first priority	Congress/ states nationally; Maine voters only if a distinct provision is proposed
Proactive management-based regulation	Require firms to build systems preventing misconduct before complaints occur	Moves ethics from punishment to risk prevention; ABA already recognizes PMBR model	Administrative burden; resistance from smaller practices	Firm self-assessment, supervisory plan, periodic certification for high-risk practice areas	ABA, SJC, Board, law firms
Judicial-conduct reform	Improve delay, demeanor, ex parte, impartiality and accountability practices	Directly addresses bench conduct without pretending judges are ordinary litigating lawyers	Cannot turn disciplinary process into substitute appeal; judicial independence concerns	SJC Code amendments, transparent annual statistics, education, complaint-process audits	SJC, Committee on Judicial Conduct, Legislature for resources/ data

The highest-yield package is therefore **rule reform + Title 19-A procedure + transparency + data + training**, not a constitutional amendment standing alone. Maine already possesses the constitutional language and independent legislative drafting structure reformers frequently propose as solutions. ⁴⁸

California supplies a useful government-lawyer ethics example. In *People ex rel. Deukmejian v. Brown*, 29 Cal. 3d 150 (1981), the California Supreme Court held that the Attorney General could withdraw when a conflict prevented representation of government clients but could not then turn around and take an adverse position against those same clients in the same controversy. The court refused to treat the AG's public role as a blanket exemption from ordinary conflict principles. [California Supreme Court opinion archive](#). ⁴⁹

Maine itself already provides a transparency model worth extending. The Legislature's Law and Legislative Reference Library maintains a collection of Attorney General opinions and memoranda, some dating to the

nineteenth century; in 2022 the AG transferred scans of its physical opinion collection, including materials not previously published. The database continues to be supplemented as opinions are located or issued.

[Maine AG Opinion Collection.](#) 50

The next logical step is not to abolish legal privilege. It is to require a **complete metadata register**: date, issuing office, requesting office, general subject, whether the opinion establishes or materially changes government policy, publication status, and statutory basis for any withholding. That makes invisible legal architecture visible without automatically exposing privileged advice.

Prioritized Action Plan and Draft Language

The campaign should begin in Maine because Maine combines explicit separation-of-powers language, centralized SJC professional regulation, an existing public rule-comment mechanism, a nonpartisan legislative drafting infrastructure, an AG-opinion archive, and a statutory best-interest framework. 51

Immediate phase — build the evidentiary record. Request five years of anonymized/aggregate data from the Board of Overseers, Judicial Branch, GAL administration and relevant agencies: family-law grievances; Rule 3.2/3.3/3.4/4.4/8.4 allegations; screening outcomes; investigation duration; warnings; public discipline; repeated complaints; family-case age; time to post-judgment enforcement; GAL appointments and costs where available; sanctions; continuances; and the frequency/duration of temporary parent-child contact restrictions. The goal is not to publish individual family files. It is to determine whether the system can measure its own performance. 52

At the same time, form a drafting group deliberately broader than aggrieved litigants: parents from different custody outcomes, adult children of high-conflict cases, domestic-violence advocates, child psychologists, social workers, ethical family lawyers, prosecutors and defense attorneys, retired judges, legal-aid lawyers, civil-liberties advocates, and public members of professional-regulation bodies. APA's own multidisciplinary approach to high-conflict family research illustrates why no single ideological constituency should control the evidence base. 44

Near-term phase — petition the SJC. Ask for a public ethics-review process focused on domestic-relations practice, not punishment of named attorneys. The petition should ask for an Advisory Committee study, public hearings, proposed rule text, a disciplinary-data standard, recurring education, and an evaluation after implementation. Maine's existing rule-comment process establishes that public participation by nonlawyers is institutionally legitimate. 24

A proposed new rule could read:

Proposed Maine Rule of Professional Conduct — Protection Against Abusive Process in Proceedings Affecting Children

A lawyer representing a party in a proceeding materially affecting the care, safety, support, residence, or parent-child relationship of a minor shall not knowingly employ a litigation act or omission whose substantial purpose is to cause unnecessary delay, impose disproportionate financial burden, intensify conflict involving the child, obstruct access to material evidence, or use the child as leverage unrelated to a legitimate legal objective.

Nothing in this Rule prohibits good-faith advocacy concerning abuse, neglect, domestic violence, coercive control, safety, constitutional rights, jurisdiction, evidentiary disputes, or any position supported by a nonfrivolous basis in law and fact.

That language deliberately borrows the “**substantial purpose**” concept already used in Maine Rule 4.4 instead of inventing an amorphous prohibition on “aggressive lawyering.” It also contains a broad safety and good-faith safe harbor to prevent the rule from silencing abuse allegations or vigorous representation.

53

A complementary comment should state:

A lawyer's duty of loyalty to a client does not require, and these Rules do not authorize, litigation activity undertaken primarily to exhaust another family member financially, prolong a dispute for strategic leverage, manipulate a child's relationship with a party, create needless hostility, or exploit procedural delay when the activity lacks a substantial legitimate purpose.

A preventive licensing rule could require:

Every attorney who enters an appearance in a domestic-relations matter involving a minor shall, once during each applicable continuing-education cycle, complete approved education concerning professional responsibility in high-conflict family systems, child development, domestic violence and coercive control, evidence integrity, trauma, proportionality in discovery and motion practice, and the avoidance of child triangulation.

This is stronger than generic “be nicer” professionalism education because it connects training to enforceable duties and measurable outcomes. The ABA's proactive-management approach supports moving professional regulation upstream instead of relying only on sanctions after harm occurs. 47

Near-to-medium legislative phase — amend Title 19-A. A model proportionality provision could state:

In a proceeding affecting parental rights and responsibilities, the court shall manage discovery, motion practice, temporary relief and post-judgment enforcement in a manner proportionate to the needs of the child and the case. Upon a finding, after notice and opportunity to be heard, that a party or counsel knowingly used a filing, discovery demand, continuance request, evidentiary omission, or other procedure primarily to cause unnecessary delay, disproportionate expense, or interference with a court-ordered parent-child relationship rather than to advance a legitimate claim or defense, the court may impose an appropriate proportionate remedy, including costs or attorney's fees.

Any such statute should expressly protect good-faith requests based on child safety, abuse or new evidence. Maine's existing §1653 makes child safety and best interests central and already provides a hearing mechanism for violations of parental-rights orders. 34

For temporary restrictions on parent-child contact, consider:

An order materially suspending or reducing established parent-child contact on an emergency or interim basis must identify the factual basis for the restriction and, unless continuation is agreed or required by an independently applicable protection order, must receive an evidentiary review within a defined period. Any continuation must be supported by written findings addressing safety, evidentiary reliability, less restrictive alternatives, and the child's best interests.

The exact deadline should be developed through Maine practitioner and judicial input rather than invented without caseload data. That is where the initial data request matters.

Transparency legislation should avoid the politically doomed demand that all government attorney-client communications become public. A more defensible statute would read:

Each covered executive legal office shall maintain a publicly accessible register of formal written legal opinions that materially authorize, prohibit, or establish the legal basis for significant government action. The register shall identify the date, issuing office, requesting governmental entity, general subject matter, and publication status. If the opinion is withheld in whole or in part, the register must identify the legal basis for withholding. Nothing in this section requires disclosure of classified information, information protected by law, or case-specific privileged communications that do not constitute operative government policy.

OLC's existing selected-publication practice and Maine's AG archive show that public legal-opinion systems are administratively feasible; the reform is completeness of the **index**, not reckless elimination of privilege.

54

Disciplinary transparency language could state:

The attorney regulatory authority shall annually publish anonymized aggregate statistics identifying the number of grievances received; primary practice area; principal rule alleged; disposition at intake; investigation outcome; median disposition time; number of warnings, diversion matters, private sanctions and public sanctions; and number of matters involving repeat respondents. No report may identify a client, minor, confidential family matter or attorney whose identity is not otherwise public through an authorized disciplinary disposition.

That reform directly addresses what the ABA national survey cannot presently standardize. 55

Federal medium-term reform should target categorical legal-policy decisions rather than individual prosecutions. A conceptual APA amendment might say:

A decision not to initiate an enforcement action remains presumptively committed to agency discretion. The presumption does not apply to a published or unpublished general policy, directive, memorandum or legal determination that prospectively suspends enforcement of a statutory requirement as to a defined class on the ground that the agency lacks legal authority, that the statute is unconstitutional, or that Congress's command will not be implemented as a matter of general policy.

Such a provision would provoke serious separation-of-powers litigation and would need congressional constitutional analysis. Its virtue is that it preserves individualized prosecutorial discretion while making **de facto suspension of legislation through categorical legal policy** more reviewable. *Heckler* is the doctrinal reason to draw that line carefully. ¹²

Long-term national phase. Take the Maine model to the ABA, Conference of Chief Justices, state professional-regulation committees and family-law organizations. The objective should be a **Model Rule on Proceedings Affecting Children**, standardized disciplinary data, model proactive-practice requirements and a model government-opinion transparency act. The ABA already treats proactive management-based regulation as a serious regulatory model designed to develop ethical infrastructure before misconduct occurs. ⁴⁷

A federal constitutional amendment explicitly stating separation principles is theoretically possible, but it should be last, not first. Federal constitutional doctrine already structurally separates powers; the practical deficiencies identified here concern enforcement, standing, privilege, reviewability, transparency and professional incentives. A new constitutional sentence would not by itself solve those operational problems. Maine demonstrates the point particularly well: it already has explicit language stronger than what many reform proposals seek, yet disputes about discretionary power and accountability remain. ⁵⁶

Advocacy, Public Records, Litigation, and Pressure Strategy

The most effective public-pressure campaign should be **institution-directed rather than personality-directed**. Naming and attacking individual judges or lawyers can rapidly turn a structural reform campaign into a dispute over personalities, defamation, pending cases, or dissatisfied litigants. A data-driven campaign forces institutions to answer harder questions: *How many complaints? How long did they take? What rules were implicated? How many family cases remain unresolved? How often are sanctions imposed? How long can temporary restrictions persist? How much are families paying? What is the rule when an attorney escalates conflict without legitimate purpose?* The ABA's own survey demonstrates that regulator performance can be measured. ⁵⁷

The core message should therefore be:

This is not anti-lawyer and it is not anti-court. It is pro-child, pro-due-process, pro-evidence and pro-accountability. Advocacy does not require avoidable harm. Discretion does not require secrecy. Judicial independence does not require immunity from measurement. And professional ethics must mean more than avoiding formal discipline.

For conservative audiences, emphasize **separation of powers, limited government, parental rights, due process and accountability of unelected institutions**. For progressive audiences, emphasize **child mental health, economic access to justice, unequal litigation resources, domestic-violence competence, public transparency and institutional accountability**. For lawyers, emphasize that stronger guardrails protect ethical practitioners from competitors who exploit delay, dishonesty, needless conflict or financial exhaustion. For judges, emphasize that measurable standards and better lawyering reduce docket congestion and frivolous conflict. Each formulation follows a different institutional incentive while pursuing the same rule set. Maine's constitution, family statute and existing professional rules already supply common ground. ⁵⁸

The first targets in Maine should be institutional: the Supreme Judicial Court and its professional-conduct advisory machinery; the Board of Overseers; the Committee on Judicial Conduct; legislators concerned with the Judiciary and children's issues; the Attorney General; the nonpartisan Revisor/OPLA legislative staff; child-development and mental-health professionals; domestic-violence organizations; legal-aid providers; ethical family lawyers; and parent groups across ideological lines. The reform should deliberately include constituencies that disagree on custody policy so the product cannot easily be dismissed as a disguised custody agenda. ⁵⁹

Public-records work should seek systems data, not children's files. Maine's Freedom of Access Act is the state's baseline public-records regime, while court access rules and specific confidentiality statutes limit access to sensitive materials. Maine also already maintains public AG opinion resources. Those structures favor requests for administrative policies, statistical reports, training materials, contract information, nonconfidential expenditure data, complaint statistics, opinion indices, retention policies and nonprivileged communications about administrative procedures. ⁶⁰

A useful Maine request could say:

Pursuant to Maine's Freedom of Access Act, please provide, in electronic format where maintained, aggregate annual data for calendar/fiscal years 2021 through 2026 concerning complaints, grievances or administrative reports involving attorneys in domestic-relations matters, including total matters received, allegations by applicable professional-conduct rule where tracked, intake disposition, investigation disposition, warning or diversion, public discipline, nonpublic discipline, and median processing time. This request seeks aggregate or de-identified administrative information and does not seek confidential client communications, sealed court records, identities of minors, or records whose disclosure is prohibited by law. If any category is withheld, please identify the statutory basis for withholding and produce all reasonably segregable nonexempt information.

For OLC and federal agencies, request **indices and metadata before demanding substantive privileged memoranda:** opinion titles, dates, recipients, general subjects, publication status, withdrawal/supersession status and records-retention categories. OLC's current reading room and selected-opinion practice provide a starting point, while the 2025 D.C. Circuit ruling makes a categorical demand for all OLC opinions under FOIA less promising than a targeted legislative-publication campaign. ⁶¹

Litigation should be strategic and record-driven. The highest-value cases are not lawsuits declaring that "the entire family court system is corrupt." They are cases presenting narrow, preservable legal questions: failure to make statutorily required findings; refusal to hold a hearing required by law; categorical government non-enforcement premised on legal authority; unlawful conflict of interest; denial of access to a legally public administrative record; or a professional rule whose application raises a clean legal question. The doctrines discussed above make broad attacks on prosecutorial choices particularly difficult, while narrow statutory and procedural claims give courts manageable standards. ⁷

Likewise, \$1983 damages suits against prosecutors for traditional advocacy functions face *Imbler* immunity. That means scarce advocacy resources are often better directed to appellate preservation, declaratory or records litigation where legally available, bar discipline based on documented rule violations, legislative reform, rulemaking, public data, and amicus participation rather than trying to use damages litigation as a universal ethics mechanism. ¹³

Professional complaints should also remain evidence-based. An ethics system loses legitimacy if it becomes a mechanism for punishing lawyers merely because they represented an unpopular position or judges because they ruled against someone. Complaints should identify the rule, the conduct, the evidence and the harm. That is especially important in Maine because Rule 8.3 itself treats serious misconduct as a professional concern while the Judicial Code distinguishes ordinary legal error from disciplinary misconduct.

62

Media pressure should be built around datasets and documents. The stronger headline is not “Judge X is evil.” It is: “Maine cannot say how many family-law ethics complaints it receives”; “Families wait X months for enforcement hearings”; “Only Y percent of ethics complaints receive a published disposition”; “Government issues legally consequential opinions without a complete public index”; or “Professional rules prohibit delay, but the system does not measure delay-related complaints.” Those claims can be independently checked, survive personnel changes and force institutional answers.

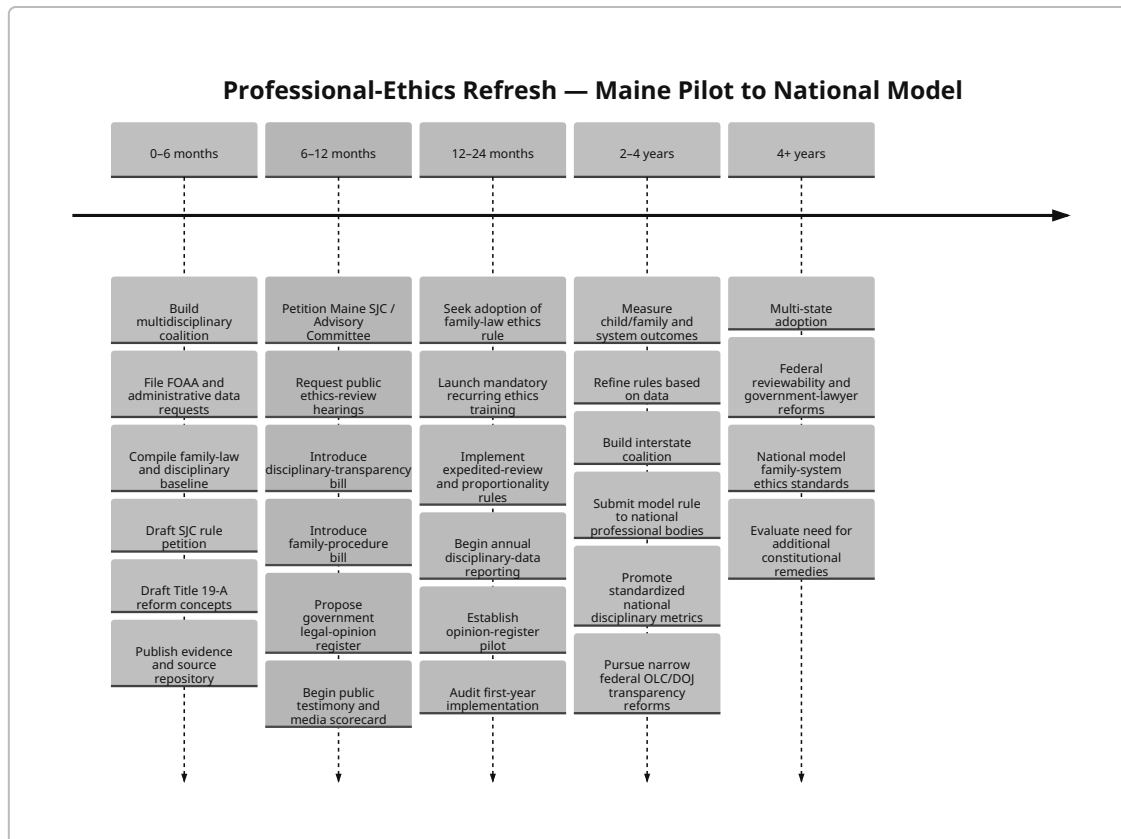
A public scorecard could track:

Institutional question	Desired public metric
Do ethics complaints disappear into a black box?	intake, dismissal, warning, investigation and sanction counts
Does discipline take too long?	median and 90th-percentile disposition time
Are family-law complaints distinguishable?	practice-area coding
Are children exposed to prolonged interim uncertainty?	age of cases and time to review major temporary restrictions
Are orders enforced promptly?	time from enforcement filing to hearing/disposition
Is litigation becoming economically disproportionate?	available attorney/GAL fee and sanction data in aggregate
Are government legal positions visible?	opinion register, published/withheld/superseded status
Are repeat problems detectable?	anonymized repeat-respondent statistics
Is reform working?	pre/post implementation trends

Those measures convert “ethics” from a professional slogan into an auditable public institution. The national ABA survey already demonstrates the feasibility—and present limitations—of collecting comparable regulatory data.

63

Implementation Timeline



This sequencing matters. **Do not begin with the hardest constitutional fight. Begin by forcing institutions to measure, disclose, define and defend what they are already doing.** Maine's SJC has the authority to regulate lawyers; the Legislature has a declared child-centered family policy; the state has unusually explicit separation-of-powers language; Maine has independent nonpartisan legislative drafting; and the AG already has an opinion archive. The reform infrastructure is not missing. It is disconnected. ⁶⁴

Primary Sources and Research Links

The following are the principal source set underlying this analysis. Primary and official sources are prioritized; peer-reviewed medical and psychological sources are identified separately.

United States Supreme Court and federal law

[Heckler v. Chaney, 470 U.S. 821 \(1985\), U.S. Reports/GovInfo](#) — presumption concerning review of agency non-enforcement. ¹²

[Wayte v. United States, 470 U.S. 598 \(1985\), U.S. Reports/GovInfo](#) — prosecutorial discretion and selective prosecution. ¹⁰

[United States v. Armstrong](#), 517 U.S. 456 (1996), [U.S. Reports/GovInfo](#) — selective-prosecution discovery standard. ¹¹

[Imbler v. Pachtman](#), 424 U.S. 409 (1976), [U.S. Reports/GovInfo](#) — absolute §1983 prosecutorial immunity for advocative functions. ¹³

[DOJ Office of Legal Counsel — Opinions](#) — OLC publication structure and statutory/delegated role. ⁶⁵

[DOJ Office of Professional Responsibility](#) and [complaint process](#) — jurisdiction and misconduct reporting. ⁶⁶

[DOJ Professional Responsibility Advisory Office](#) — federal attorney professional-responsibility advice and 28 U.S.C. §530B implementation. ¹⁵

[DOJ Office of the Solicitor General](#) — current description of OSG functions and participation in Supreme Court merits litigation. ⁶⁷

Maine constitutional, court and professional-regulation sources

[Maine Supreme Judicial Court](#) — Law Court and institutional governance roles, including lawyer/judge regulation. ⁶⁸

[Maine Rules of Professional Conduct](#) — Rules 3.1–3.4, 3.8, 4.4, 8.3 and 8.4. ⁶⁹

[Maine Code of Judicial Conduct](#) — judicial independence, impartiality, diligence, hearing rights, demeanor and ex parte rules. ⁷⁰

[Maine Board of Overseers of the Bar](#) — SJC-created attorney regulatory structure. ⁷¹

[Maine Board of Overseers Annual Reports](#) — historical disciplinary reporting. ⁷²

[4 M.R.S. §851](#) — statutory information against attorney mechanism. ⁷³

[4 M.R.S. §9-B](#) — SJC authority concerning judicial conduct committee rules. ⁷⁴

[Board of Overseers v. Lee](#), 422 A.2d 998 (Me. 1980) — separation of powers and inherent judicial authority. ²²

[In re Dunleavy](#), 2003 ME 124 — Maine's rigorous separation-of-powers doctrine and citation to *State v. Hunter*. ⁵⁶

Maine family law, transparency and legislative independence

[19-A M.R.S. §1653](#) — best interests, safety, parental contact, mediation policy and enforcement. ³³

[19-A M.R.S. §1507](#) — guardians ad litem in contested family proceedings. ⁷⁵

[Maine Judicial Branch — Guardians ad Litem in Family Matters](#) — appointments and party-funded GAL costs. 76

[Maine Judicial Branch — Electronic Court Records](#) — current public/party access framework and confidentiality limitations. 36

[Maine Attorney General Opinions and Memoranda Collection](#) — public archive. 50

[Maine Office of the Revisor of Statutes](#) — nonpartisan legislative drafting and statute-production functions. 77

[Maine's Path of Legislation](#) — Revisor, OPLA and fiscal-office drafting/research roles. 78

[Maine Freedom of Access Act, Title 1, chapter 13](#) — state public-records framework. 79

Comparative ethics and regulation

[People ex rel. Deukmejian v. Brown, 29 Cal. 3d 150 \(1981\)](#) — government attorney conflicts and former clients. 49

[Texas Constitution and Statutes official repository](#) — current official constitutional/statutory database. Maine's Article III already supplies substantially the structural protection for which Texas is often cited as a model. 80

[ABA 2023 Survey on Lawyer Discipline Systems](#) — national regulatory data. 28

[ABA Professional Regulation Committee / Proactive Management-Based Regulation](#) — preventive ethics model. 47

Clinical and behavioral-science evidence

[van Dijk et al., meta-analysis of interparental conflict, parenting and child adjustment after divorce, PubMed PMID 32512420](#) — 115 samples, 24,854 families. 5

[Feinberg, Kan & Hetherington, coparenting conflict and adolescent maladjustment, PubMed PMID 21874069](#) — longitudinal family-conflict evidence. 37

[Trinder, Kellet & Swift, contact and child adjustment in high-conflict post-separation cases, PubMed PMID 32847185](#) — cautions against simplistic contact assumptions. 81

[Relations of parenting quality, conflict and overnights in high-legal-conflict divorcing families, PubMed PMID 24098960](#) — parenting and contextual factors. 82

[Triangulation and child adjustment after parental divorce, PubMed PMID 35771503](#) — loyalty conflict and self-esteem mechanisms. 40

[Child maltreatment and parental separation/conflict, PubMed PMID 36154718](#) — co-occurrence and need for careful safety assessment. ⁴¹

[Longitudinal mental-health study following parental divorce, PubMed PMID 16291507](#) — heterogeneous adjustment effects. ⁸³

[APA Guidelines for Child Custody Evaluations](#) — impartiality, competence, conflict-of-interest and adversarial-context concerns. ⁸⁴

[APA Guidelines for Psychological Evaluations in Child Protection Matters](#) — 2024 evidence-informed child-harm assessment guidance. ⁸⁵

[APA Working Group on High-Conflict Family Relationships With Child Involvement](#) — multidisciplinary scientific review initiative. ⁴⁴

The core conclusion survives scrutiny: **the most realistic way to “force” an ethics refresh is to make professional ethics measurable, preventive, enforceable and institutionally unavoidable.** In Maine, that means using the Supreme Judicial Court's existing authority over lawyers and judges, the Legislature's authority over family policy and governmental transparency, Maine's unusually strong separation-of-powers language, the state's existing independent legislative staff, and public-records/data pressure at the same time. ⁸⁶

The objective is not to abolish adversarial representation. An adversarial system still needs lawyers capable of challenging the government, exposing abuse, defending unpopular clients and forcefully contesting false claims. The objective is much more precise:

No professional system should treat unnecessary conflict, strategic delay, financial exhaustion, evidence manipulation, child triangulation, institutional secrecy, or unaccountable discretion as acceptable collateral consequences merely because they can be dressed in procedurally lawful form.

Maine already possesses many of the guardrails on paper. The reform opportunity is to connect them—**constitutional separation, professional responsibility, child welfare, transparency, empirical measurement and consequences**—and then make that integrated model exportable to every jurisdiction. ⁸⁷

¹ ⁵⁹ ⁶⁴ ⁶⁸ ⁸⁶ Supreme Court: State of Maine Judicial Branch
<https://www.courts.maine.gov/courts/sjc/>

² ²² ²³ Board of Overseers of the Bar v. Lee :: 1980 :: Maine Supreme Judicial Court Decisions :: Maine Case Law :: Maine Law :: U.S. Law :: Justia
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³ ⁴⁸ ⁵¹ ⁵⁶ ⁵⁸ ⁸⁷ 2003 ME 124 - In Re Dunleavy | OpenJurist
<https://openjurist.org/2003/me/124/in-re-dunleavy-2399312>

4 25 53 62 69 M.R. Prof. Conduct only 2023-09-28

https://www.courts.maine.gov/rules/text/mr_prof_conduct_only_2023-09-28.pdf

5 A meta-analysis on interparental conflict, parenting, and child adjustment in divorced families: Examining mediation using meta-analytic structural equation models - PubMed

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32512420/>

6 45 81 The Relationship Between Contact and Child Adjustment in High Conflict Cases after Divorce or Separation.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32847185/>

7 12 Heckler v. Chaney, 470 U.S. 821 (1985) - USREPORTS-470-821 | Content Details | GovInfo

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15 Professional Responsibility Advisory Office | About the Office

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<https://www.justice.gov/oip/campaign-accountability-v-doj-no-24-5163-2025-wl-2942433-dc-cir-oct-17-2025-pan-j>

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https://mebaroverseers.org/regulation/bar_rules.html

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33 34 39 Title 19-A, §1653: Parental rights and responsibilities

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35 75 Title 19-A, §1507: Appointment of guardian ad litem in contested proceedings

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37 The Longitudinal Influence of Coparenting Conflict on Parental Negativity and Adolescent Maladjustment.

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38 82 Relations of parenting quality, interparental conflict, and overnights with mental health problems of children in divorcing families with high legal conflict.

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