

Boston Marathon and Hurricane Sandy show Lawyer Reputation Undeserved

by Donald Scarinci

In a recent poll reflecting how the public views the ethical standards of various professions, lawyers ranked in the 19th percentile. Lawyers came in slightly below business executives in the 21st percentile and well below medical doctors, which rank in the 70th percentile.

Unfortunately, it is not only unfair for the public to generalize groups of people based on a few bad members of that group, but it also creates an inaccurate stigma against that group.

Most lawyers are among the most generous and well-meaning people in society. Many give their time freely to causes and activities that they find meaningful. Most lawyers attend law school in the first place to make a difference in the world.

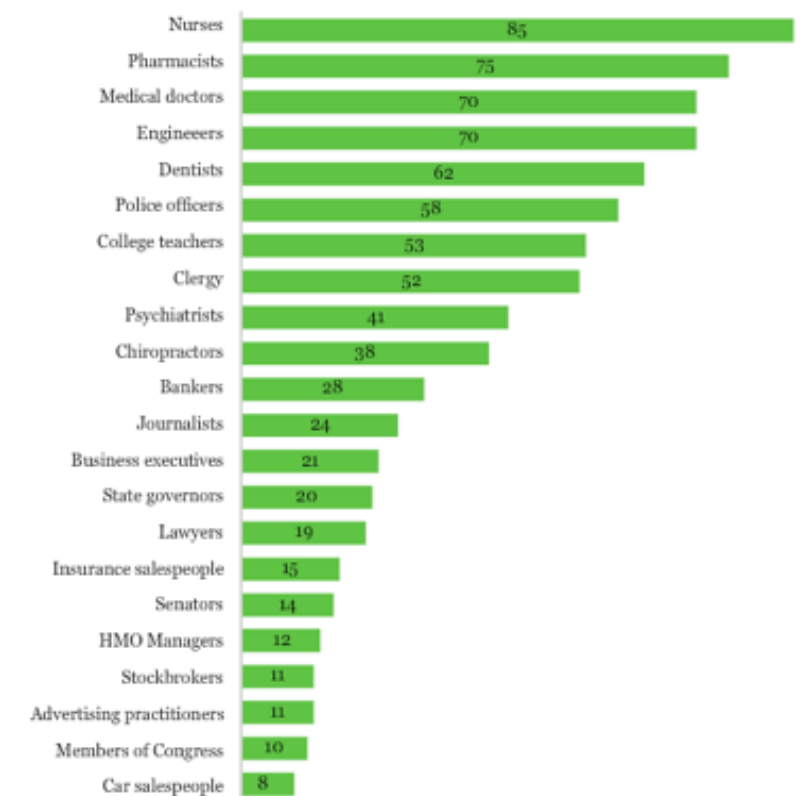
For some recent examples to challenge the lawyer stereotype, we can look at how lawyers have [stepped up in the face of recent tragedies](#). Following Superstorm Sandy, New Jersey lawyers held free legal clinics for businesses and [homeowners impacted by the devastating storm](#).

In Boston, law firms are offering free legal assistance to the hundreds of businesses impacted by the Marathon bombing. Many offices, stores, hotels, and restaurants around the marathon finish line were forced to close for over a week as investigators combed the area for evidence. Businesses closer to the bomb blasts had employees who were injured and suffered significant property damage. All of these situations require insurance claims and possibly legal action.

Please tell me how you would rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields -- very high, high, average, low or very low?

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■ % Very high/High



GALLUP

As many Bostonians have done in recent weeks, the legal community stepped up to help these businesses, many of which lost significant revenue in the wake of the bombing. As the [ABA Journal](#) reports, more than 150 attorneys, 20 law firms, and several Boston-area law schools responded to the Boston Bar Association's request for volunteer lawyers.

The legal community is also contributing financially to aid in the crisis. The Boston Bar Foundation contributed \$25,000 and the Massachusetts Bar Association donated \$10,000 to One Fund Boston, the charity established to help bombing victims. The fund is also run pro bono by a local Boston firm.