

4.6 Discussion on Data Related to Handwriting Option for Applicants without Testing Accommodations (Hounanian/Lieu)



The State Bar of California

Discussion on Data Related to Handwriting Option for Applicants Without Testing Accommodations

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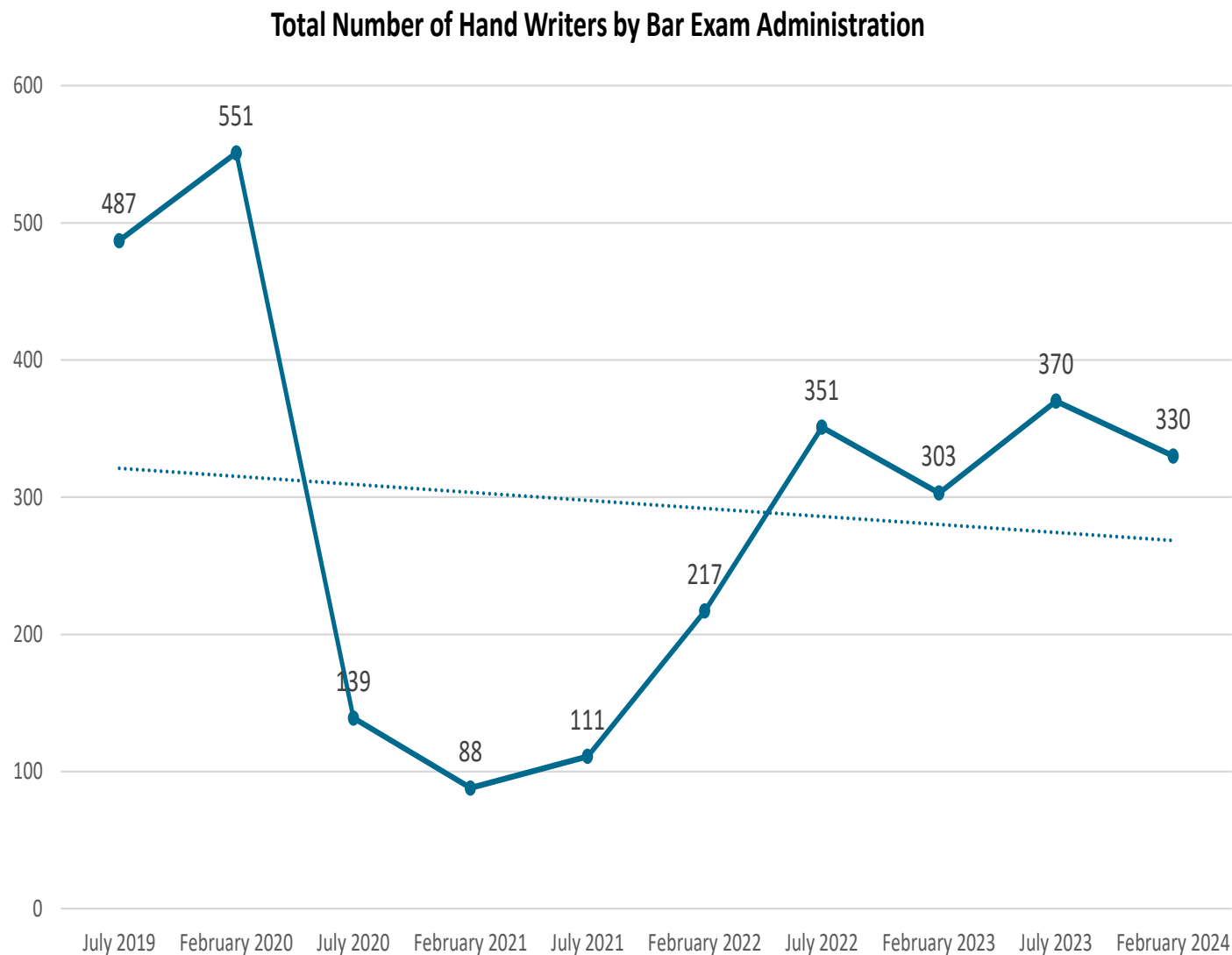
Committee of Bar Examiners, October 11, 2024

Background

- Applicants can request to handwrite the California Bar Examination without an approved testing accommodation.
- Only 8% of applicants sitting for the February 2024 bar exam selected the handwriting option.
- **Computer-based high-stakes exams:**
 - NextGen Bar Exam
 - SAT, LSAT, GRE, GMAT
 - Licensing Exams:
 - United States Medical Licensing Examination
 - National Board Dental Examinations
 - NCLEX - Nursing licensure exam
 - Uniform CPA Exam
 - Engineer licensure exams
 - Architect Registration Examination

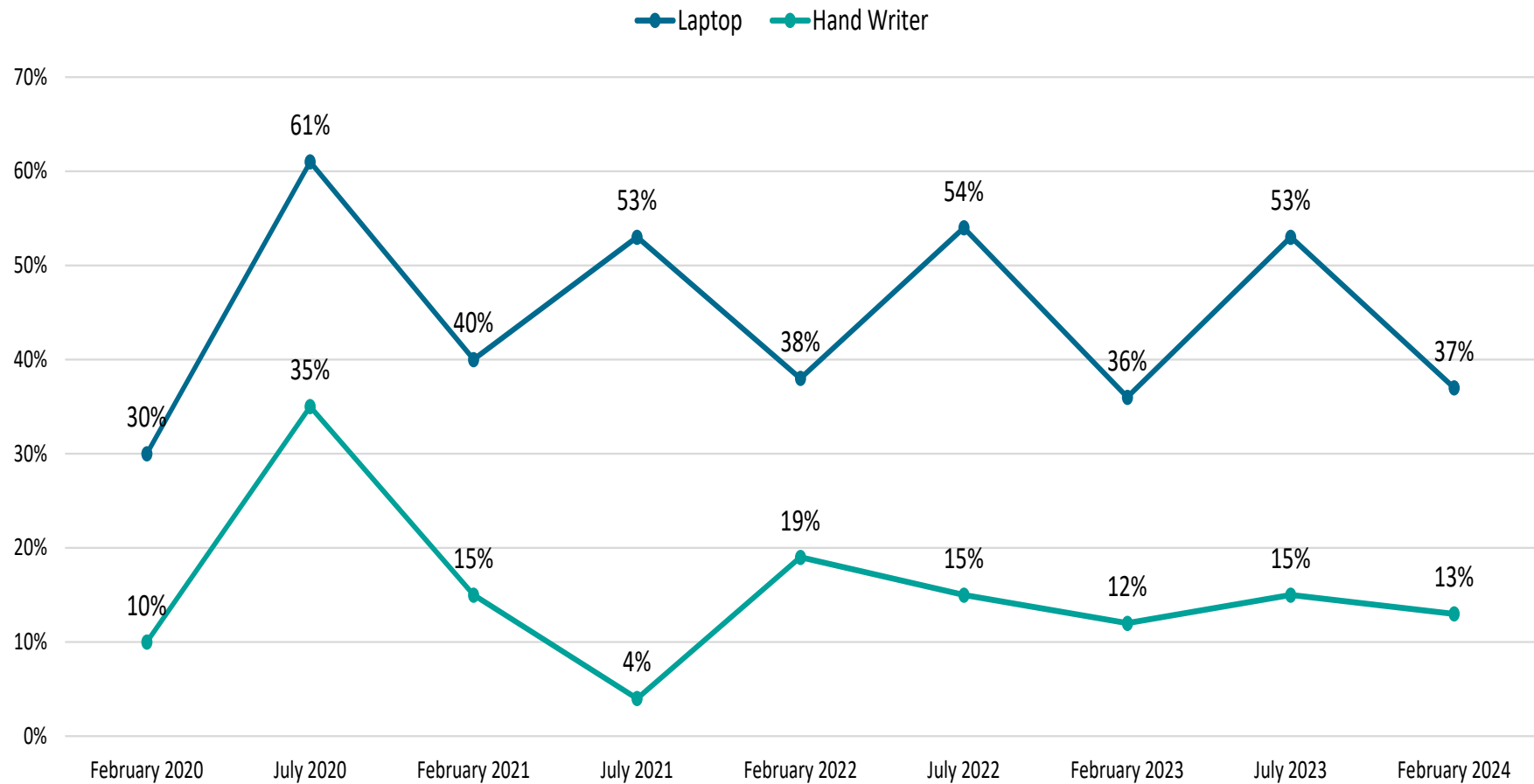


Overall Trends



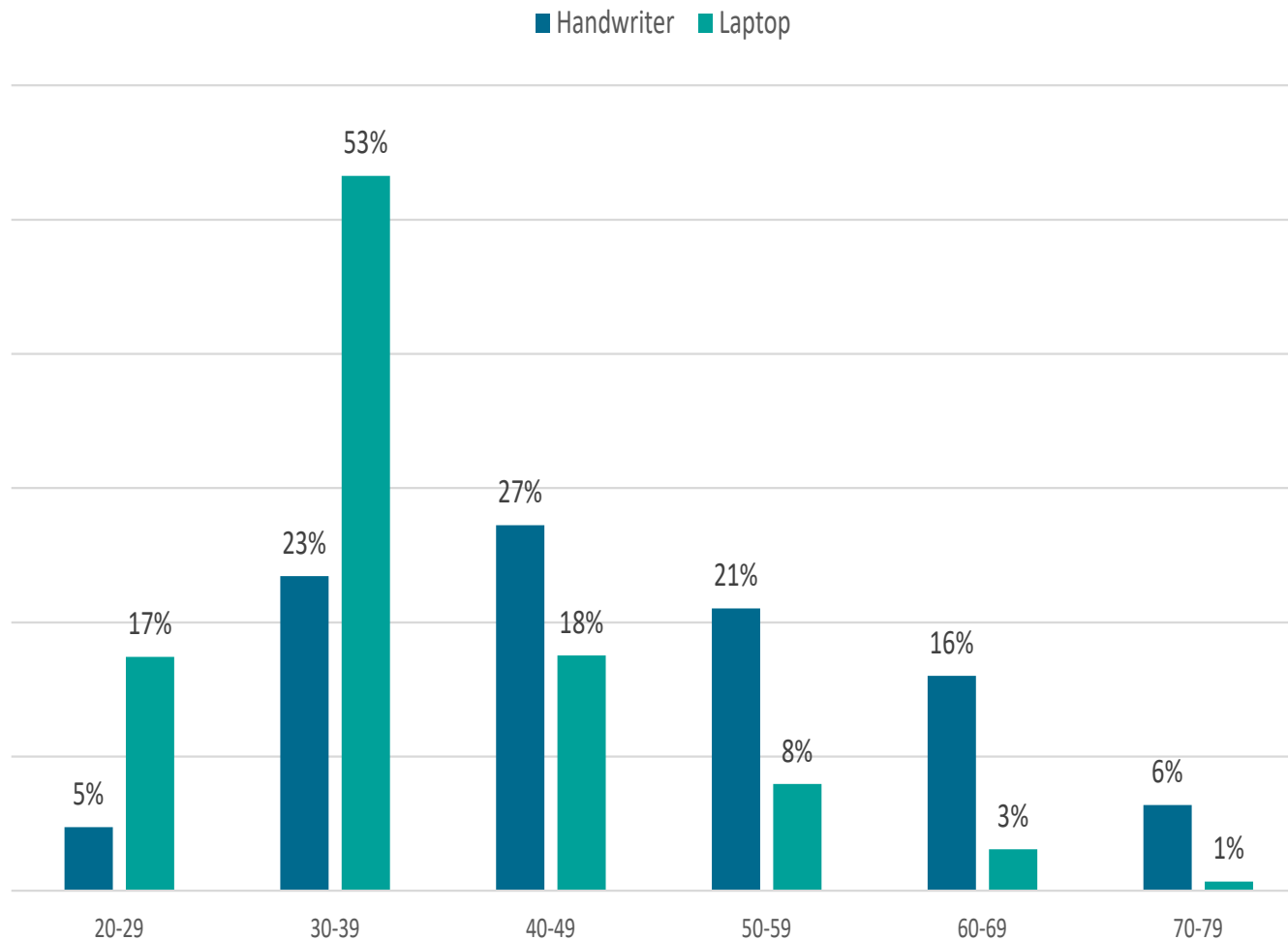
Exam Outcomes

Passage Rate for Laptop and Hand Writer Test Takers
by California Bar Exam Administration



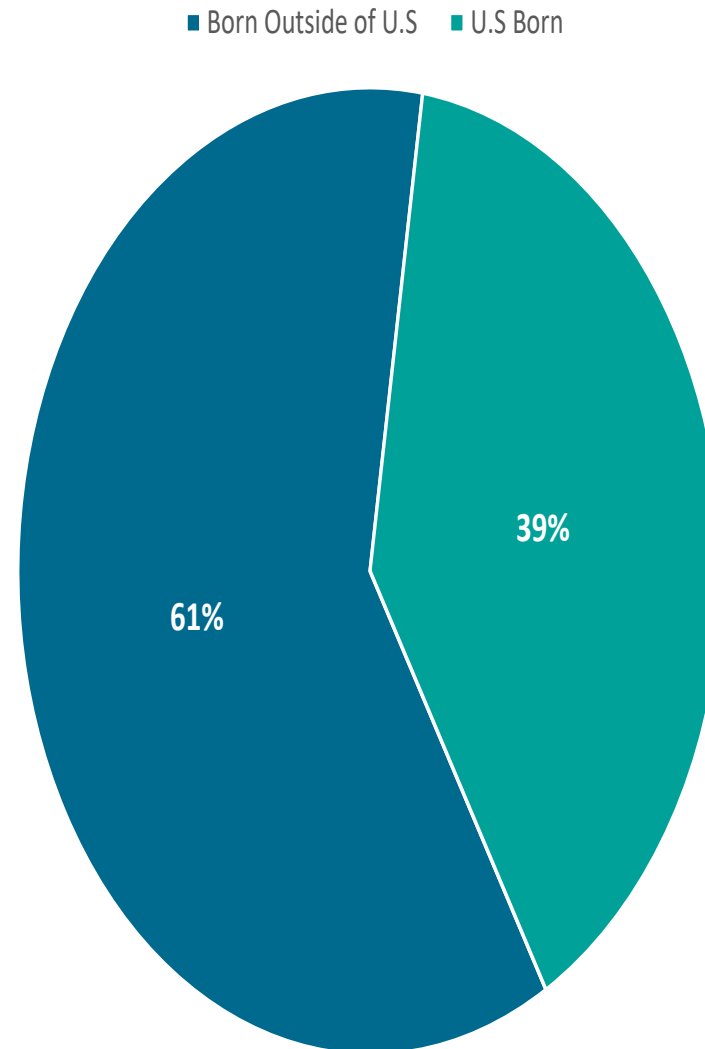
Demographic Trends

Percentage of Laptop and Hand Writer Test Takers in Age Groups
from July 2019 to February 2024



Demographic Trends

Country of Birth for Hand Writers from July 2019 to February 2024



Considerations for February 2025 and Beyond

Financial Considerations

- Current direct cost for hand writers is 2% higher than laptop test takers.
 - Under new approach, cost will be up to 600% higher than remote test takers.
 - May cost up to \$200,000 total in additional costs.

Operational Challenges

- Delivery of exam materials to many more locations poses exam security risk.
- Limited space at test centers.
- Additional time and expenses: scanning responses, reading essays, secure shipping costs, etc...

Impact on Applicants

- Hand writers may incur additional expenses related to testing in person.



Today's Discussion



Total hand writers remains lower than pre-pandemic levels.



Handwriting mostly chosen due to test-taker preference.



Hand writers are older, more likely to be born outside of US, and less likely to pass bar exam.



Future exam approach poses new financial and operational challenges.



Committee is asked to discuss options moving forward.



Possible Options Moving Forward

- **Option 1: Maintain status quo**
 - At odds with trends in high-stakes examinations.
 - Additional exam expenses.
 - Operational challenges.
- **Option 2: Sunset handwriting**
 - End handwriting for non-TA applicants beginning with July 2026 exam.
 - Align with first administration of computer-delivered NextGen Bar Exam.
 - Could cost up to \$600,000 in additional exam costs.
- **Option 3: Grandfather handwriters**
 - End handwriting for non-TA applicants beginning with July 2025 exam.
 - Grandfather applicants who have already taken an exam as a hand writer.
- **Option 4: Combination of option 2 and 3**



Questions?

