

BIER LAW BULLETIN

Be Informed. Be Prepared. Be Free.

Each month, our goal is to offer you valuable insights for maintaining an up-to-date estate plan, share some personal and firm highlights, and introduce you to one of your local experts. We also welcome your input on subjects you'd like to delve deeper into; simply respond to this email and let us know what might interest you!

Seth and Leann Bier

What's Happening

Recent News and Upcoming Events



[Click to Register](#)

UPCOMING WEBINAR: ESTATE PLANNING BASICS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 | 5:00 PM

In this live webinar, learn the story of Bill and Mary Jones — a couple who thought they had taken the right steps to protect their loved ones — and how unexpected health issues forced their family into court...multiple times.

A sudden incapacity led to conservatorship proceedings costing time, money, and privacy. Later, despite having Wills in place, their children were required to go through probate. It was exactly the burden they had hoped to spare their family.

Join Seth as he walks you through the Jones family story and shows how a properly structured Trust-based plan can completely change the outcome.

NEW ON OUR WEBSITE: PROBATE FEE CALCULATOR

One of the most common questions we hear is, "How expensive is probate in California?"

The answer often surprises people — because probate fees are based on the *fair market value* of the estate, not just the equity.

To make this easier to understand, we've added a simple Probate Fee Calculator to our home page. It provides a quick estimate of statutory probate fees so you can see the potential impact in real numbers.

Clarity doesn't obligate you to do anything — but it does help you make informed decisions.

[Try the Probate Calculator](#)



TED TALK

*A Pawsitively Exciting Update on **FROM** CEO (Chief Excitement Officer) Teddy Bier!*

Last month, the Boss left us for a whole entire week to visit Grandma in Wisconsin (where apparently white stuff just *falls* out of the sky?!?!). So it was just me and the Lawyer. Bachelor week.

At first, I wasn't sure how it was going to go. The Boss usually runs a pretty tight ship. The Lawyer? Let's just say he's more "go with the flow." Fortunately, I stepped up. Morning patrol. Walks. Park time. Supervising while he worked. Someone had to maintain standards.

When the Boss finally came home, I had some celebratory energy to burn. We marked the occasion with a proper trip to Vista so I could get my usual round of pets from Danny (five-star service, as always) and secure a puppy patty. Balance was restored.

Back at home, I threw myself into household projects. Recycling day? I handled the boxes. Thoroughly. There was one small miscalculation involving a coffee box and the size of my head, but we recovered quickly and no dignity was permanently lost.

All in all, bachelor week was solid... but it's definitely better when the whole pack is together. 🐾



I've got this.



You're welcome.

From Seth's Desk

Real questions. Plain-English answers.

DEAR SETH,

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY ESTATE WOULD HAVE TO GO THROUGH PROBATE?

– CURIOUS HOMEOWNER



Dear Curious,

In California, probate is generally required when someone passes away owning assets in their individual name that exceed the current threshold (currently \$208,850). For many homeowners, that means the fair market value of their home alone can trigger probate — even if there's still a mortgage.

Here's the important distinction: probate isn't based on equity. It's based on value.

If assets are properly held in a trust or have designated beneficiaries, they typically avoid probate. If they're not, the court steps in.

The goal isn't to scare anyone — it's simply to understand how ownership affects outcomes. Planning is less about how much you have and more about how it's structured.

Next step: Review how your major assets are titled. Structure matters.

Have a question for Seth? Reply with ASK SETH.

Knowledge is Power

Highlighted Articles, Blogs, & Reports

BLOG: TRUSTS ARE NOT JUST FOR RICH PEOPLE

Many South Bay homeowners tell us the same thing: “We’re not rich; we probably don’t need a Trust.”

But in California, owning a home alone can change the planning equation. A Will does not avoid probate, and for many families, the real goal isn’t complexity — it’s clarity and simplicity for the people they love. In this month’s blog, we explain when a Trust makes sense, how probate works in California, and why Trust planning is often more about organization than wealth.

👉 [Click to read full blog](#)



The Expert Exchange

Conversations with Local Professionals

Get to know a little more about the experts in our community.

Justin Acuña

Co-Founder, Senior Care Advisor

[Aging Advising](#)

What do you do?

I help seniors and families make confident decisions about care. Aging Advising provides guidance, resources, and support to navigate home care, senior living, and next steps —so no one feels alone during important transitions.

What’s the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is turning confusion into clarity. I love helping families make confident decisions that protect their loved one’s safety, dignity, and quality of life.

What’s the most common misconception people have about your industry?

The biggest misconception about my profession is that I simply place seniors in facilities. In reality, I carefully assess medical needs, finances, and family dynamics to guide families toward the safest, most appropriate care solution for their loved one.

What would people be surprised to learn about you?

People are often surprised to learn I used to run a clothing company and have a creative background. Outside of work, I enjoy collecting vinyl records—especially rare finds. It’s a passion that keeps me inspired and connected to culture beyond my profession.

What’s your favorite local restaurant?

My favorite local restaurant is Bonello’s New York Pizza in Torrance. The owners always make me feel welcome, and they play the best ’90s songs. I order the double pepperoni with fresh garlic every time—it never misses and always hits the spot!

