

THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF MICHIGAN

PATRICIA PEREZ FRESARD
CHIEF JUDGE

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Office of Administrative Counsel
Ms. Sarah Roth
PO Box 30052
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Ms. Roth:

The Third Circuit Court supports the proposed amendment to MCR 1.109. The proposed changes to MCR 1.109 recognize the diversity of our state and will allow attorneys and parties to include their pronouns in the documents and require Courts to use those personal pronouns. The proposed changes therefore ensure that Michigan's courts are more accessible to all users, by recognizing who people are.

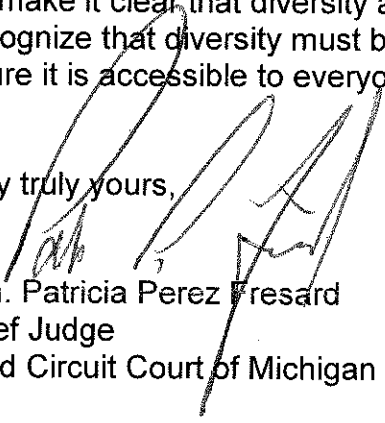
A critical component of access is acknowledging people's pronouns. Access ensures that our judges and staff practice inclusion and show respect to all who come before them. Some Third Circuit Court personnel include their pronouns in the signature line of their emails and with their name when on Zoom. These early adopters strive to build better workplace inclusion. With the court rule change, perhaps sharing personal pronouns will become the norm in our court and our legal community.

Access takes many forms. Our court recognizes the need for increasing diversity in judgeships and other court professions. If we wish to serve our community, we need to understand LBGTQIA+ and other diverse representation in our courthouses and must establish needed external relationships as well. We are grateful for Ruth Ellis who helped our LBGTQIA+ youth with services and Affirmations which is just on the other side of the county line but accessible with training and services as well. The changes in MCR 1.109 lays a foundation upon which we can pursue these goals.

As our courts become more culturally inclusive, the public's access to and confidence that the Courts serve all citizens will increase.

Often diversity is presented as an aside to justice, something that is nice to have. The proposed changes to MCR 1.109, however, make it clear that diversity and justice are integral, intertwined concepts and that our Courts recognize that diversity must be acknowledged and appreciated if we seriously endeavor to ensure it is accessible to everyone.

Very truly yours,



Hon. Patricia Perez Presard
Chief Judge
Third Circuit Court of Michigan

PPF/dcl