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Comment:

Please support the proposed amendments and rule changes that apply to the use of personal pronouns in all state courts in Michigan.

Courts have a duty to acknowledge the requested pronouns of all litigants and parties before them, in all communications and pleadings as well as inside the courtroom. It is a vital component of equal access to justice. The Michigan Code of Judicial Conduct requires judges and court staff to treat litigants with courtesy and respect:

“Without regard to a person’s race, gender, or other protected personal characteristic, a judge should treat every person fairly, with courtesy and respect. To the extent possible, a judge should require staff, court officials, and others who are subject to the judge’s direction and control to provide such fair, courteous, and respectful treatment to persons who have contact with the court.”

It is the responsibility of Michigan courts to ensure equal treatment under the law for all people before them, including transgender people. When people participating in our legal system feel unsafe or uncomfortable because of their gender identity, access to justice and full participation in democracy is undermined.

A person’s identity, including their name and pronouns, is a central element of dignity and humanity. Using the articulated pronouns of litigants and their attorneys is a positive start to equity and inclusion in Michigan courts. Please support the proposed amendments to make this happen.