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Comment:

I am concerned about the proposed amendment of Rule 6.5(a) of the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct.

The proposal to amend Rule 6.5(a) restricts speech in a significant way. There are no boundaries for when a lawyer can and cannot express themselves (at the office, outside of the office, during office hours, after office hours). The proposed rule does not define "person involved in the legal process." Under the proposed rule, any person who has ever received a traffic ticket (or who has a traffic ticket pending) could fall under this broad and ambiguous language.

I was raised by a progressive, feminist activist and have been encouraged throughout my childhood to stand up for what I believe is right. I dislike our current president and could be precluded, under this amendment, from expressing "bias or prejudice ... against" the current president (as he could be classified as "any person involved in the legal process") "based upon ... political affiliation."

This applies to people whose beliefs are different than mine. We should be able to express our beliefs without fear of repercussion.

This rule goes too far and could subject lawyers to a slew of grievances. The current language that a "lawyer shall treat with courtesy and respect all persons in the legal process" regardless of "race, gender, or other protected personal characteristic" is appropriate as is. If the current rule were simply expanded to include other categories such as gender identity and sexual orientation, etc., the freedom of expression would not be infringed as it is in the proposed amendment.