

Name: Becca Zarras

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Comment:

I, Becca Zarras, am writing in support of the changes to MCR 4.201, the eviction case court rule, that the Supreme Court has proposed. I am currently a judicial attorney at the 3rd Circuit Court in Wayne County. In this role, I assist in reviewing eviction appeals from the district courts in Wayne County. I was previously a civil clerk at the 31st District Court in Hamtramck during the COVID-19 eviction moratorium. Many of the tenants are pro se, meaning they are unrepresented by an attorney, while most landlords have an attorney. It is clear from the court records we receive that pro se litigants feel rushed with the current eviction process and do not know their legal rights. Pro se litigants would greatly benefit from additional time and the legal resources being proposed in the changes to the current Michigan Court Rule.

Prior to law school, I was a case manager with the YWCA assisting women leaving violent intimate partner relationships. Many times, these women would have evictions on their record as they were forced to leave their homes without notice to escape their abusive partners. Perhaps if they had been given adequate time to retain an attorney as afforded by this new subrule, their evictions could have been avoided. In many Michigan cities, once a person has an eviction on their record, they are ineligible for rental assistance and other community housing programs. Evictions cause tremendous harm not only to the evicted families, but also the communities they live in. The proposed court rule changes may help reduce some of this harm. Please approve the proposed changes and take all actions within your power to protect the rights and lives of Michigan tenants.

Sincerely,  
Becca Zarras