

APPENDIX R. Guidelines for Litigation Conduct

Introduction

The widely-perceived, accelerating decline in professionalism - often denominated "civility" - has been the subject of increasing concern to the profession for many, years. Twice since 1988, the American Bar Association has urged adoption of, and adherence to, civility codes. What has been lacking, however, is an ABA-endorsed model code. The GUIDELINES FOR LITIGATION CONDUCT fill that void.

These GUIDELINES are consensus-driven and state nothing novel or revolutionary. They are purely aspirational and are not to be used as a basis for litigation, liability, discipline, sanctions or penalties of any type. The GUIDELINES are designed not to promote punishment but rather to elevate the tenor of practice - to set a voluntary, higher standard, "in the hope that," in the words of former ABA President John J. Curtin, 46some progress might be made towards greater professional satisfaction."

The GUIDELINES FOR LITIGATION CONDUCT are modeled on the Standards for Professional Conduct adopted by the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, a set of proven aspirational standards. Chief United States District Judge Marvin E. Aspen of Chicago, architect of the Seventh Circuit Standards, has accurately observed that civility in the legal profession is inextricably linked to the manner in which lawyers are perceived by the public - and, therefore, to the deteriorating public confidence that our system of justice enjoys.

Deteriorating civility, in former ABA President Lee Cooper's words, "interrupts the administration of justice. It makes the practice of law less rewarding. It robs a lawyer of the sense of dignity and self-worth that should come from a learned profession. Not least of all, it ... brings with it all the problems ... that accompany low public regard for lawyers and lack of confidence in the justice system."

The problem of incivility is more pervasive, and insidious, than its impact on the legal profession alone. As Justice Anthony M. Kennedy has stressed:

Civility is the mark of an accomplished and superb professional, but it is more even than this. It is an end in itself. Civility has deep roots in the idea of respect for the individual.

The decline in civility is not limited to the legal profession, but this profession has been in the forefront of those addressing this problem. These GUIDELINES are offered in this spirit.

Gregory P. Joseph
Chair, 1997-1998
Section of Litigation
American Bar Association

Guidelines for Litigation Conduct

August 1998

Preamble

A lawyer's conduct should be characterized at all times by personal courtesy and professional integrity in the fullest sense of those terms. In fulfilling our duty to represent a client vigorously as lawyers, we will be mindful of our obligations to the administration of justice, which is a truth-seeking process designed to resolve human and societal problems in a rational, peaceful, and efficient manner.

A judge's conduct should be characterized at all times by courtesy and patience toward all participants. As judges we owe to all participants in a legal proceeding respect, diligence, punctuality, and protection against unjust and improper criticism or attack.

Conduct that may be characterized as uncivil, abrasive, abusive, hostile, or obstructive impedes the fundamental goal of resolving disputes rationally, peacefully, and efficiently. Such conduct tends to delay and often to deny justice.

The following Guidelines are designed to encourage us, judges and lawyers, to meet our obligations to each other, to litigants and to the system of justice, and thereby achieve the twin goals of civility and professionalism, both of which, are hallmarks of a learned profession dedicated to public service.

We encourage judges, lawyers and clients to make a mutual and firm commitment to these Guidelines.

We support the principles espoused in the following Guidelines, but under no circumstances should these Guidelines be used as a basis for litigation or for sanctions or penalties.

Lawyers' Duties to Other Counsel

1. We will practice our profession with a continuing awareness that our role is to zealously advance the legitimate interests of our clients. In our dealings with others we will not reflect the ill feelings of our clients. We will treat all other counsel, parties, and witnesses in a civil and courteous manner, not only in court, but also in all other written and oral communications. We will refrain from acting upon or manifesting bias or prejudice based upon race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status toward any participant in the legal process.

2. We will not, even when called upon by a client to do so, abuse or indulge in offensive conduct directed to other counsel, parties, or witnesses. We will abstain from disparaging personal remarks or acrimony toward other counsel, parties, or witnesses. We will treat adverse witnesses and parties with fair consideration.
3. We will not encourage or knowingly authorize any person under our control to engage in conduct that would be improper if we were to engage in such conduct.
4. We will not, absent good cause, attribute bad motives or improper conduct to other counsel.
5. We will not lightly seek court sanctions.
6. We will in good faith adhere to all express promises and to agreements with other counsel, whether oral or in writing, and to all agreements implied by the circumstances or local customs.
7. When we reach an oral understanding on a proposed agreement or a stipulation and decide to commit it to writing, the drafter will endeavor in good faith to state the oral understanding accurately and completely. The drafter will provide other counsel the opportunity to review the writing. As drafts are exchanged between or among counsel, changes from prior drafts will be identified in the draft or otherwise explicitly brought to other counsel's attention. We will not include in a draft matters to which there has been no agreement without explicitly advising other counsel in writing of the addition.
8. We will endeavor to confer early with other counsel to assess settlement possibilities. We will not falsely hold out the possibility of settlement to obtain unfair advantage.
9. In civil actions, we will stipulate to relevant matters if they are undisputed and if no good faith advocacy basis exists for not stipulating.
10. We will not use any form of discovery or discovery scheduling as a means of harassment.
11. Whenever circumstances allow, we will make good faith efforts to resolve by agreement objections before presenting them to the court.
12. We will not time the filing or service of motions or pleadings in any way that unfairly limits another party's opportunity to respond.
13. We will not request an extension of time solely for the purpose of unjustified delay or to obtain unfair advantage.
14. We will consult other counsel regarding scheduling matters in a good faith effort to avoid scheduling conflicts.

15. We will endeavor to accommodate previously scheduled dates for hearings, depositions, meetings, conferences, vacations, seminars, or other functions that produce good faith calendar conflicts on the part of other counsel.
16. We will promptly notify other counsel and, if appropriate, the court or other persons, when hearings, depositions, meetings, or conferences are to be canceled or postponed.
17. We will agree to reasonable requests for extensions of time and for waiver of procedural formalities, provided our clients' legitimate rights will not be materially or adversely affected.
18. We will not cause any default or dismissal to be entered without first notifying opposing counsel, when we know his or her identity, unless the rules provide otherwise.
19. We will take depositions only when actually needed. We will not take depositions for the purposes of harassment or other improper purpose.
20. We will not engage in any conduct during a deposition that would not be appropriate in the presence of a judge.
21. We will not obstruct questioning during a deposition or object to deposition questions unless permitted under applicable law.
22. During depositions we will ask only those questions we reasonably believe are necessary, and appropriate, for the prosecution or defense of an action.
23. We will carefully craft document production requests so they are limited to those documents we reasonably believe are necessary, and appropriate, for the prosecution or defense of an action. We will not design production requests to place an undue burden or expense on a party, or for any other improper purpose.
24. We will respond to document requests reasonably and not strain to interpret requests in an artificially restrictive manner to avoid disclosure of relevant and non-privileged documents. We will not produce documents in a manner designed to hide or obscure the existence of particular documents, or to accomplish any other improper purpose.
25. We will carefully craft interrogatories so they are limited to those matters we reasonably believe are necessary, and appropriate, for the prosecution or defense of an action, and we will not design them to place an undue burden or expense on a party, or for any other improper purpose.
26. We will respond to interrogatories reasonably and will not strain to interpret them in an artificially restrictive manner to avoid disclosure of relevant and non-privileged information, or for any other improper purpose.

27. We will base our discovery objections on a good faith belief in their merit and will not object solely for the purpose of withholding or delaying the disclosure of relevant information, or for any other improper purpose.

28. When a draft order is to be prepared by counsel to reflect a court ruling, we will draft an order that accurately and completely reflects the court's ruling. We will promptly prepare and submit a proposed order to other counsel and attempt to reconcile any differences before the draft order is presented to the court.

29. We will not ascribe a position to another counsel that counsel has not taken.

30. Unless permitted or invited by the court, we will not send copies of correspondence between counsel to the court.

31. Nothing contained in these Guidelines is intended or shall be construed to inhibit vigorous advocacy, including vigorous cross-examination.

Lawyers' Duties to the Court

1. We will speak and write civilly and respectfully in all communications with the court.

2. We will be punctual and prepared for all court appearances so that all hearings, conferences, and trials may commence on time; if delayed, we will notify the court and counsel, if possible.

3. We will be considerate of the time constraints and pressures on the court and court staff inherent in their efforts to administer justice.

4. We will not engage in any conduct that brings disorder or disruption to the courtroom. We will advise our clients and witnesses appearing in court of the proper conduct expected and required there and, to the best of our ability, prevent our clients and witnesses from creating disorder or disruption.

5. We will not knowingly misrepresent, mis-characterize, misquote, or mis-cite facts or authorities in any oral or written communication to the court.

6. We will not write letters to the court in connection with a pending action, unless invited or permitted by the court.

7. Before dates for hearings or trials are set, or if that is not feasible, immediately after such date has been set, we will attempt to verify the availability of necessary participants and witnesses so we can promptly notify the court of any likely problems.

8. We will act and speak civilly* to court marshals, clerks, court reporters, secretaries, and law clerks with an awareness that they, too, are an integral part of the judicial system.

Courts' Duties to Lawyers

1. We will be courteous, respectful, and civil to lawyers, parties, and witnesses. We will maintain control of the proceedings, recognizing that judges have both the obligation and the authority to insure that all litigation proceedings are conducted in a civil manner.

2. We will not employ hostile, demeaning, or humiliating words in opinions or in written or oral communications with lawyers, parties, or witnesses.

3. We will be punctual in convening all hearings, meetings, and conferences; if delayed, we will notify counsel, if possible.

4. In scheduling all hearings, meetings and conferences we will be considerate of time schedules of lawyers, parties, and witnesses.

5. We will make all reasonable efforts to decide promptly all matters presented to us for decision.

6. We will give the issues in controversy deliberate, impartial, and studied analysis and consideration.

7. While endeavoring to resolve disputes efficiently, we will be considerate of the time constraints and pressures imposed on lawyers by the exigencies of litigation practice.

8. We recognize that a lawyer has a right and a duty to present a cause fully and properly, and that a litigant has a right to a fair and impartial hearing. Within the practical limits of time, we will allow lawyers to present proper arguments and to make a complete and accurate record.

9. We will not impugn the integrity or professionalism of any lawyer on the basis of the clients whom or the causes which a lawyer represents.

10. We will do our best to insure that court personnel act civilly toward lawyers, parties, and witnesses.

11. We will not adopt procedures that needlessly increase litigation expense.

12. We will bring to lawyers' attention uncivil conduct which we observe.

Judges' Duties to Each Other

1. We will be courteous, respectful, and civil in opinions, ever mindful that a position articulated by another judge is the result of that judge's earnest effort to interpret the law and the facts correctly.
2. In all written and oral communications, we will abstain from disparaging personal remarks or criticisms, or sarcastic or demeaning comments about another judge.
3. We will endeavor to work with other judges in an effort to foster a spirit of cooperation in our mutual goal of enhancing the administration of justice.

(i) Admission Fee

An attorney admitted to the bar of this Court shall pay an admission fee in the amount set by the Court. The Clerk shall collect such funds and maintain them in the manner set forth by the Court in the Plan for Administration and Operation of the Attorney's Admission Fee Account. Such funds are to be used for projects which the Court determines are for the benefit of the bench and bar in the administration of justice within the District.

(j) Appearance of Attorneys in Criminal Cases

This Rule does not govern the appearance of attorneys representing defendants in criminal cases.

Amended: August 4, 1998, March 31, 1999, March 22, 2005, March 9, 2007, May 1, 2010

Civ. RULE 102.1 WITHDRAWAL OF APPEARANCE

Unless other counsel is substituted, no attorney may withdraw an appearance except by leave of Court. After a case has been first set for trial, substitution and withdrawal shall not be permitted except by leave of Court.

Civ. RULE 103.1 JUDICIAL ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

(a) The Rules of Professional Conduct of the American Bar Association as revised by the New Jersey Supreme Court shall govern the conduct of the members of the bar admitted to practice in this Court, subject to such modifications as may be required or permitted by Federal statute, regulation, court rule or decision of law.

(b) The Code of Judicial Conduct of the American Bar Association shall govern the conduct of the Judges of this Court, subject to such modifications as may be required or permitted by Federal statute, regulation, court rule or decision of law.

(c) The GUIDELINES FOR LITIGATION CONDUCT adopted by the American Bar Association's Section of Litigation in August 1998, are hereby adopted by this Court and incorporated into these Rules as Appendix R. These Guidelines have been adopted by this Court to encourage civility, courtesy and professionalism among the bench and the bar. They are purely aspirational in nature and are not to be used as a basis for litigation, liability, discipline, sanctions, or penalties of any type.

Amended: March 31, 1999

Civ. RULE 104.1 DISCIPLINE OF ATTORNEYS

The Court, in furtherance of its inherent power and responsibility to supervise the conduct of attorneys who are admitted to practice before it or admitted for the purpose of a particular proceeding (pro hac vice), promulgates the following Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement superseding all of its other Rules pertaining to disciplinary enforcement heretofore

promulgated.

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(a) Attorneys Convicted of Crimes

(1) Upon the filing with this Court of a certified copy of a judgment of conviction demonstrating that any attorney admitted to practice before the Court has been convicted in any court of the United States, or the District of Columbia, or any state, territory, commonwealth or possession of the United States, of a serious crime as hereinafter defined, the Chief Judge shall immediately enter an order temporarily suspending that attorney, whether the conviction resulted from a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, or from a verdict after trial or otherwise, and regardless of the pendency of any appeal, until final disposition of a disciplinary proceeding to be commenced upon such conviction. A copy of such order shall immediately be served upon the attorney. Upon good cause shown, the Court may set aside such order when the interest of justice requires.

(2) The term "serious crime" shall include any felony and any lesser crime a necessary element of which, as determined by the statutory or common law definition of such crime in the jurisdiction where the judgment was entered, involves false swearing, misrepresentation, fraud, willful failure to file income tax returns, deceit, bribery, extortion, misappropriation, theft, or an attempt, conspiracy or solicitation of another to commit a "serious crime."

(3) A certified copy of a judgment of conviction of an attorney for any crime shall be conclusive evidence of the commission of that crime in any disciplinary proceeding instituted against that attorney based upon the conviction.

(4) After the entry of the temporary suspension, the Court shall enter an Order to Show Cause as to why the temporary suspension should not be made permanent. If the suspended

attorney does not contest the matter by the return date of the Order to Show Cause, the Court shall enter an Order of Disbarment barring the attorney from the practice of law before the Court. If the attorney does contest the matter, the Court can refer the matter to counsel in accordance with subsections (5) and (6).

(5) Where the conviction of an attorney is for a serious crime, the Court shall refer the matter to counsel, who will represent the interests of the Court, for the institution of a disciplinary proceeding before the Court in which the sole issue to be determined shall be the extent of the final discipline to be imposed as a result of the conduct resulting in the conviction, provided that a disciplinary proceeding so instituted will not be brought to final hearing until all direct appeals from the conviction are concluded. Counsel shall investigate and research the matter, and make a recommendation to the Court as to the appropriate sanction to be imposed in accordance with subsection (e)(4).

(6) Where the conviction of an attorney is for a crime not constituting a serious crime, the Court may, in its discretion, refer the matter to counsel for a recommendation as to what action, if any, should be taken, including the institution of a disciplinary proceeding before the Court.

(7) An attorney suspended under the provisions of this Rule will be reinstated immediately upon the filing of a certificate demonstrating that the underlying conviction of a serious crime has been reversed but the reinstatement will not terminate any disciplinary proceeding then pending against the attorney, the disposition of which shall be determined by the Court on the basis of all available evidence pertaining to both guilt and the extent of discipline to be imposed.

(b) Discipline Imposed by Other Courts

(1) Any attorney admitted to practice before this Court shall, upon being subjected to public discipline by any other court of the United States or the District of Columbia, or by a court of any state, territory, commonwealth or possession of the United States, promptly inform the Clerk of this Court of such action.

(2) Upon the filing of a certified or exemplified copy of a judgment or order demonstrating that an attorney admitted to practice before this Court has been disciplined by another court, this Court shall forthwith issue a notice directed to the attorney containing:

(A) a copy of the judgment or order from the other court; and

(B) an order to show cause directing that the attorney inform this Court within 30 days after service of that order upon the attorney, personally or by mail, of any claim by the attorney predicated upon the grounds set forth in L.Civ.R. 104.1(b)(4), that the imposition of the identical discipline by the Court would be unwarranted, and the reasons therefor.

(3) In the event the discipline imposed in the other jurisdiction has been stayed there,

any reciprocal discipline imposed in this Court shall be deferred until such stay expires.

(4) Upon the expiration of 30 days from service of the notice issued pursuant to the provisions of L.Civ.R. 104.1(b)(2), this Court shall impose the identical discipline unless the respondent-attorney demonstrates or this Court finds that, upon the face of the record upon which the discipline in another jurisdiction is predicated, it clearly appears:

(A) that the procedure was so lacking in notice or opportunity to be heard as to constitute a deprivation of due process; or

(B) that there was such an infirmity of proof establishing the misconduct as to give rise to the clear conviction that this Court could not, consistent with its duty, accept as final the conclusion on that subject; or

(C) that the imposition of the same discipline by this Court would result in grave injustice; or

(D) that the misconduct established is deemed by this Court to warrant substantially different discipline. Where this Court determines that any of said elements exist, it shall enter such other order as it deems appropriate.

(5) In all other respects, a final adjudication in another court that an attorney has been guilty of misconduct shall establish conclusively the misconduct for the purposes of a disciplinary proceeding in this Court.

(6) This Court may, at any stage, appoint counsel to prosecute the disciplinary proceedings.

(c) Disbarment on Consent or Resignation in Other Courts

(1) Any attorney admitted to practice before this Court who shall be disbarred on consent or resign from the bar of any other court of the United States or the District of Columbia, or from the bar of any state, territory, commonwealth or possession of the United States, while an investigation into allegations of misconduct is pending, shall, upon the filing with this Court of a certified or exemplified copy of the judgment or order accepting such disbarment on consent or resignation, cease to be permitted to practice before this Court and be stricken from the roll of attorneys admitted to practice before this Court.

(2) Any attorney admitted to practice before this Court shall, upon being disbarred on consent or resigning from the bar of any other court of the United States or the District of Columbia, or from the bar of any state, territory, commonwealth or possession of the United States while an investigation into allegations of misconduct is pending, promptly inform the Clerk of this Court of such disbarment on consent or resignation.

(d) Standards for Professional Conduct

(1) For misconduct defined in these Rules and for good cause shown, and after notice and opportunity to be heard, any attorney admitted to practice before this Court may be disbarred, suspended from practice before this Court, reprimanded or subjected to such other disciplinary action as the circumstances may warrant.

(2) An act or omission by an attorney admitted to practice before this Court, individually or in concert with any other person or persons, which violates the applicable Rules of Professional Conduct referred to in L.Civ.R. 103.1 shall constitute misconduct and be grounds for discipline whether or not the act or omission occurred in the course of an attorney-client relationship.

(e) Disciplinary Proceedings

(1) Every attorney authorized to practice law or appearing before this Court, including those specially authorized for a limited purpose or in connection with a particular proceeding pursuant to L.Civ.R. 101.1, shall be subject to the disciplinary jurisdiction of this Court.

(2) When misconduct or allegations of misconduct which, if substantiated, would warrant discipline of an attorney, shall come to the attention of a Judge of this Court, and the applicable procedure is not otherwise mandated by these Rules, that Judge shall refer the matter in writing to the Chief Judge. The Chief Judge may refer the matter to the appropriate State disciplinary body or, if the Chief Judge concludes that further investigation is warranted, he or she shall direct the Clerk to refer the matter to an attorney ("investigating counsel") who is admitted to practice before this Court to conduct such an investigation in order to determine whether a formal order to show cause should issue.

(3) The Clerk's order of reference to investigating counsel and all other papers filed in the matter shall be placed under seal and shall remain under seal unless and until an order to show cause and complaint are issued under L.Civ.R. 104.1(e)(7), at which point an order shall be entered unsealing the entire file.

(4) Investigating counsel shall promptly, and with reasonable particularity, notify the respondent-attorney ("respondent") in writing of the pendency and nature of the investigation and solicit comments thereon in furtherance of the preliminary investigation. Every attorney, as set forth in L.Civ.R. 104.1(e)(1), has the affirmative obligation to cooperate in an investigation. Such cooperation shall include the production of documents and submission to interviews conducted by the investigating counsel as follows:

(A) Respondent shall serve upon investigating counsel a response to the inquiry within 30 days of service of the inquiry.

(B) Investigating counsel may conduct such discovery as is reasonable necessary to complete the investigation, which may include interviews of the respondent, depositions, requests for

production of documents and requests for admissions.

(C) Respondent shall serve upon investigating counsel a response to any request for production of documents or request for admissions within 30 days of service of the request.

(D) The time within which to respond pursuant to (A) and (C) above may be extended by investigating counsel for good cause shown.

(E) If respondent fails to respond or otherwise fails to cooperate with investigating counsel, investigating counsel shall apply to the Chief Judge for appropriate relief which may include, but is not limited to, temporary suspension, pending compliance with this rule.

(F) Failure to cooperate may constitute an independent basis for the imposition of discipline unless it is based upon the proper assertion of a legal or constitutional right.

(5) Conclusion of No Formal Disciplinary Proceeding. Should investigating counsel conclude after investigation and review that a formal disciplinary proceeding should not be initiated against the respondent because (A) sufficient evidence of misconduct is not present, or (B) there is pending another proceeding against the respondent, the disposition of which in the judgment of the investigating counsel should be concluded before further action by this Court, or (C) any other valid reason exists, investigating counsel shall submit a report to the Chief Judge containing his or her findings and recommendations for disposition of the matter. If the Chief Judge concludes that no further action is required or that the matter should be deferred pending conclusion of another proceeding against the respondent, the Chief Judge shall instruct investigating counsel to so notify the respondent. If the Chief Judge concludes that further investigation is required he or she shall remand the matter to investigating counsel for further investigation in accordance with the Chief Judge's directive.

(6) Conclusion of Discipline by Consent. Should investigating counsel conclude after investigation and review that a private reprimand or public discipline should be issued to the respondent, and the respondent consents to the recommendation of investigating counsel, the investigating counsel shall submit a written report to the Chief Judge containing his or her findings and recommendations. If the Chief Judge approves the recommendation of investigating counsel, he or she shall submit the report to the full Court for review and disposition. If the Chief Judge or the full Court concludes that further investigation is required, the matter shall be remanded to investigating counsel for further investigation in accordance with the Chief Judge's or the full Court's directive. If the respondent does not consent to the issuance of either a private reprimand or public discipline as recommended by the investigating counsel, the investigating counsel shall proceed in accordance with the provisions of L.Civ.R. 104.1(e)(7).

(7) Conclusion of Public Discipline. Should investigating counsel conclude that sufficient evidence of misconduct exists warranting the imposition of public discipline, investigating counsel shall submit a written report and application to the Chief Judge for the issuance of a Complaint and an order to show cause signed by the Chief Judge

requiring the respondent to show cause why such discipline should not be imposed.

(8) Upon the Chief Judge's issuance of a complaint and order to show cause as set forth in L.Civ.R. 104.1(e)(7), the respondent shall file an answer within 21 days of the receipt of the complaint and order to show cause. In the answer respondent may set forth all affirmative defenses, including all claims of mental and physical disability, if any, and whether they are alleged to be causally related to the offense charged. Within 30 days of the filing of an answer, the respondent and investigating counsel may serve demands for discovery.

(9) Upon the filing of a complaint and order to show cause, as set forth in L.Civ.R. 104.1(e)(7), the Chief Judge shall set the matter for prompt hearing before a Judge, provided, however, that if the disciplinary proceeding is predicated upon the complaint of a Judge of this Court, the hearing shall be conducted before a different Judge appointed by the Chief Judge, or if the Chief Judge is the complainant, by the next active Judge senior in commission.

(10) The hearing referred to in L.Civ.R. 104.1(e)(9) shall be presented by the investigating counsel. A stenographic record shall be made of the proceeding. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Judge assigned to the matter shall submit his or her findings of fact, conclusions of law and recommendations, if any, to the full Court for action, with a copy to the respondent and to investigating counsel.

(11) The full Court shall review the findings of fact, conclusions of law and recommendations of the Judge designated by the Chief Judge to hear the matter, the transcript of the hearings and the briefs previously filed with the Court. The record may be supplemented by the filing of briefs pursuant to a schedule fixed by the Chief Judge for review on the record and briefs, without oral argument, by the full Court. The full Court shall take whatever action it deems appropriate including, but not limited to, the dismissal of the action, private reprimand, the issuance of a public reprimand, suspension or disbarment.

(12) If a respondent desires legal representation, but claims to be unable to retain counsel by reason of indigence, the respondent may make application to the Chief Judge for appointment of counsel. Upon exceptional circumstances having been shown, the Judge to whom the matter has been assigned shall designate an attorney who is admitted to practice before this Court to represent respondent in the matter.

(13) In furtherance of the investigation proceeding pursuant to L.Civ.R. 104.1(e)(4), investigating counsel may seek the issuance of a subpoena ad testificandum or a subpoena duces tecum by making an application to the Chief Judge. After an order to show cause has been issued by the Chief Judge pursuant to L.Civ.R. 104.1(e)(7), investigating counsel and respondent may seek the issuance of the aforesaid subpoenas by way of application to the Judge designated to hear the matter.

(14) The standard of proof in proceedings before the Judge designated to hear the matter and the full Court shall be clear and convincing evidence, and the burden of proof under that

standard shall be on the investigating counsel.

(f) Disbarment on Consent While Under Disciplinary Investigation or Prosecution

(1) Any attorney admitted to practice before this Court who is the subject of an investigation into or a pending proceeding involving allegations of misconduct may consent to disbarment, but only by delivering to this Court an affidavit or other document complying with 28 U.S.C. § 1746 stating that the attorney desires to consent to disbarment and that:

(A) the attorney's consent is freely and voluntarily rendered; the attorney is not being subjected to coercion or duress; the attorney is fully aware of the implications of such consent;

(B) the attorney is aware that there is presently pending an investigation or proceeding involving allegations that there exist grounds for the attorney's discipline, the nature of which the attorney shall specifically set forth;

(C) the attorney acknowledges that the material facts so alleged are true; and (D) the attorney so consents because the attorney knows that if charges were predicated upon the matters under investigation, or if the proceeding were prosecuted, the attorney could not successfully defend.

(2) Upon receipt of the required affidavit or other document complying with 28 U.S.C. § 1746, this Court shall enter an order disbarring the attorney signed by the Chief Judge, unless unavailable, at which time the order shall be signed by the next active Judge senior in commission.

(3) The order disbarring the attorney on consent shall be a matter of public record; however, the affidavit or other document complying with 28 U.S.C. § 1746 required by this Rule shall not be publicly disclosed or made available for use in any other proceeding except upon order of this Court.

(g) Reinstatement

(1) After Disbarment or Suspension

An attorney suspended for three months or less shall be automatically reinstated at the end of the period of suspension upon filing with the Court an affidavit or other document complying with

28 U.S.C. § 1746 of compliance with the provisions of the order. An attorney suspended for more than three months or disbarred may not resume practice until reinstated by order of this Court.

(2) Time of Application Following Disbarment

Executive Order 12988

Wednesday
February 7, 1996

Part V

The President

Executive Order 12988—Civil Justice
Reform

Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Executive Order 12988 of February 5, 1996

The President

Civil Justice Reform

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and in order to improve access to justice for all persons who wish to avail themselves of court and administrative adjudicatory tribunals to resolve disputes, to facilitate the just and efficient resolution of civil claims involving the United States Government, to encourage the filing of only meritorious civil claims, to improve legislative and regulatory drafting to reduce needless litigation, to promote fair and prompt adjudication before administrative tribunals, and to provide a model for similar reforms of litigation practices in the private sector and in various states, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Guidelines to Promote Just and Efficient Government Civil Litigation.* To promote the just and efficient resolution of civil claims, those Federal agencies and litigation counsel that conduct or otherwise participate in civil litigation on behalf of the United States Government in Federal court shall respect and adhere to the following guidelines during the conduct of such litigation:

(a) *Pre-filing Notice of a Complaint.* No litigation counsel shall file a complaint initiating civil litigation without first making a reasonable effort to notify all disputants about the nature of the dispute and to attempt to achieve a settlement, or confirming that the referring agency that previously handled the dispute has made a reasonable effort to notify the disputants and to achieve a settlement or has used its conciliation processes.

(b) *Settlement Conferences.* As soon as practicable after ascertaining the nature of a dispute in litigation, and throughout the litigation, litigation counsel shall evaluate settlement possibilities and make reasonable efforts to settle the litigation. Such efforts shall include offering to participate in a settlement conference or moving the court for a conference pursuant to Rule 16 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure in an attempt to resolve the dispute without additional civil litigation.

(c) *Alternative Methods of Resolving the Dispute in Litigation.* Litigation counsel shall make reasonable attempts to resolve a dispute expeditiously and properly before proceeding to trial.

(1) Whenever feasible, claims should be resolved through informal discussions, negotiations, and settlements rather than through utilization of any formal court proceeding. Where the benefits of Alternative Dispute Resolution ("ADR") may be derived, and after consultation with the agency referring the matter, litigation counsel should suggest the use of an appropriate ADR technique to the parties.

(2) It is appropriate to use ADR techniques or processes to resolve claims of or against the United States or its agencies, after litigation counsel determines that the use of a particular technique is warranted in the context of a particular claim or claims, and that such use will materially contribute to the prompt, fair, and efficient resolution of the claims.

(3) To facilitate broader and effective use of informal and formal ADR methods, litigation counsel should be trained in ADR techniques.

(d) *Discovery.* To the extent practical, litigation counsel shall make every reasonable effort to streamline and expedite discovery in cases under counsel's supervision and control.

(1) *Review of Proposed Document Requests.* Each agency within the executive branch shall establish a coordinated procedure for the conduct and review of document discovery undertaken in litigation directly by that agency when that agency is litigation counsel. The procedure shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, review by a senior lawyer prior to service or filing of the request in litigation to determine that the request is not cumulative or duplicative, unreasonable, oppressive, unduly burdensome or expensive, taking into account the requirements of the litigation, the amount in controversy, the importance of the issues at stake in the litigation, and whether the documents can be obtained from some other source that is more convenient, less burdensome, or less expensive.

(2) *Discovery Motions.* Before petitioning a court to resolve a discovery motion or petitioning a court to impose sanctions for discovery abuses, litigation counsel shall attempt to resolve the dispute with opposing counsel. If litigation counsel makes a discovery motion concerning the dispute, he or she shall represent in that motion that any attempt at resolution was unsuccessful or impracticable under the circumstances.

(e) *Sanctions.* Litigation counsel shall take steps to seek sanctions against opposing counsel and opposing parties where appropriate.

(1) Litigation counsel shall evaluate filings made by opposing parties and, where appropriate, shall petition the court to impose sanctions against those responsible for abusive practices.

(2) Prior to filing a motion for sanctions, litigation counsel shall submit the motion for review to the sanctions officer, or his or her designee, within the litigation counsel's agency. Such officer or designee shall be a senior supervising attorney within the agency, and shall be licensed to practice law before a State court, courts of the District of Columbia, or courts of any territory or Commonwealth of the United States. The sanctions officer or designee shall also review motions for sanctions that are filed against litigation counsel, the United States, its agencies, or its officers.

(f) *Improved Use of Litigation Resources.* Litigation counsel shall employ efficient case management techniques and shall make reasonable efforts to expedite civil litigation in cases under that counsel's supervision and control. This includes but is not limited to:

(1) making reasonable efforts to negotiate with other parties about, and stipulate to, facts that are not in dispute;

(2) reviewing and revising pleadings and other filings to ensure that they are accurate and that they reflect a narrowing of issues, if any, that has resulted from discovery;

(3) requesting early trial dates where practicable;

(4) moving for summary judgment in every case where the movant would be likely to prevail, or where the motion is likely to narrow the issues to be tried; and

(5) reviewing and revising pleadings and other filings to ensure that unmeritorious threshold defenses and jurisdictional arguments, resulting in unnecessary delay, are not raised.

Sec. 2. *Government Pro Bono and Volunteer Service.* All Federal agencies should develop appropriate programs to encourage and facilitate pro bono legal and other volunteer service by government employees to be performed on their own time, including attorneys, as permitted by statute, regulation, or other rule or guideline.

Sec. 3. *Principles to Enact Legislation and Promulgate Regulations Which Do Not Unduly Burden the Federal Court System.*

(a) *General Duty to Review Legislation and Regulations.* Within current budgetary constraints and existing executive branch coordination mechanisms and procedures established in OMB Circular A-19 and Executive Order No. 12866, each agency promulgating new regulations, reviewing existing regulations, developing legislative proposals concerning regulations, and developing new legislation shall adhere to the following requirements:

(1) The agency's proposed legislation and regulations shall be reviewed by the agency to eliminate drafting errors and ambiguity;

(2) The agency's proposed legislation and regulations shall be written to minimize litigation; and

(3) The agency's proposed legislation and regulations shall provide a clear legal standard for affected conduct rather than a general standard, and shall promote simplification and burden reduction.

(b) *Specific Issues for Review.* In conducting the reviews required by subsection (a), each agency formulating proposed legislation and regulations shall make every reasonable effort to ensure:

(1) that the legislation, as appropriate—

(A) specifies whether all causes of action arising under the law are subject to statutes of limitations;

(B) specifies in clear language the preemptive effect, if any, to be given to the law;

(C) specifies in clear language the effect on existing Federal law, if any, including all provisions repealed, circumscribed, displaced, impaired, or modified;

(D) provides a clear legal standard for affected conduct;

(E) specifies whether private arbitration and other forms of private dispute resolution are appropriate under enforcement and relief provisions; subject to constitutional requirements;

(F) specifies whether the provisions of the law are severable if one or more of them is found to be unconstitutional;

(G) specifies in clear language the retroactive effect, if any, to be given to the law;

(H) specifies in clear language the applicable burdens of proof;

(I) specifies in clear language whether it grants private parties a right to sue and, if so, the relief available and the conditions and terms for authorized awards of attorney's fees, if any;

(J) specifies whether State courts have jurisdiction under the law and, if so, whether and under what conditions an action would be removable to Federal court;

(K) specifies whether administrative proceedings are to be required before parties may file suit in court and, if so, describes those proceedings and requires the exhaustion of administrative remedies;

(L) sets forth the standards governing the assertion of personal jurisdiction, if any;

(M) defines key statutory terms, either explicitly or by reference to other statutes that explicitly define those terms;

(N) specifies whether the legislation applies to the Federal Government or its agencies;

(O) specifies whether the legislation applies to States, territories, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and of the Northern Mariana Islands;

(P) specifies what remedies are available such as money damages, civil penalties, injunctive relief, and attorney's fees; and

(Q) addresses other important issues affecting clarity and general draftsmanship of legislation set forth by the Attorney General, with the concurrence of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB") and after consultation with affected agencies, that are determined to be in accordance with the purposes of this order.

(2) that the regulation, as appropriate—

(A) specifies in clear language the preemptive effect, if any, to be given to the regulation;

(B) specifies in clear language the effect on existing Federal law or regulation, if any, including all provisions repealed, circumscribed, displaced, impaired, or modified;

(C) provides a clear legal standard for affected conduct rather than a general standard, while promoting simplification and burden reduction;

(D) specifies in clear language the retroactive effect, if any, to be given to the regulation;

(E) specifies whether administrative proceedings are to be required before parties may file suit in court and, if so, describes those proceedings and requires the exhaustion of administrative remedies;

(F) defines key terms, either explicitly or by reference to other regulations or statutes that explicitly define those items; and

(G) addresses other important issues affecting clarity and general draftsmanship of regulations set forth by the Attorney General, with the concurrence of the Director of OMB and after consultation with affected agencies, that are determined to be in accordance with the purposes of this order.

(c) *Agency Review.* The agencies shall review such draft legislation or regulation to determine that either the draft legislation or regulation meets the applicable standards provided in subsections (a) and (b) of this section, or it is unreasonable to require the particular piece of draft legislation or regulation to meet one or more of those standards.

Sec. 4. *Principles to Promote Just and Efficient Administrative Adjudications.*

(a) *Implementation of Administrative Conference Recommendations.* In order to promote just and efficient resolution of disputes, an agency that adjudicates administrative claims shall, to the extent reasonable and practicable, and when not in conflict with other sections of this order, implement the recommendations of the Administrative Conference of the United States, entitled "Case Management as a Tool for Improving Agency Adjudication," as contained in 1 C.F.R. 305.86-7 (1991).

(b) *Improvements in Administrative Adjudication.* All Federal agencies should review their administrative adjudicatory processes and develop specific procedures to reduce delay in decision-making, to facilitate self-representation where appropriate, to expand non-lawyer counseling and representation where appropriate, and to invest maximum discretion in fact-finding officers to encourage appropriate settlement of claims as early as possible.

(c) *Bias.* All Federal agencies should review their administrative adjudicatory processes to identify any type of bias on the part of the decision-makers that results in an injustice to persons who appear before administrative adjudicatory tribunals; regularly train all fact-finders, administrative law judges, and other decision-makers to eliminate such bias; and establish appropriate mechanisms to receive and resolve complaints of such bias from persons who appear before administrative adjudicatory tribunals.

(d) *Public Education.* All Federal agencies should develop effective and simple methods, including the use of electronic technology, to educate the public about its claims/benefits policies and procedures.

Sec. 5. *Coordination by the Department of Justice.*

(a) The Attorney General shall coordinate efforts by Federal agencies to implement sections 1, 2 and 4 of this order.

(b) To implement the principles and purposes announced by this order, the Attorney General is authorized to issue guidelines implementing sections 1 and 4 of this order for the Department of Justice. Such guidelines shall serve as models for internal guidelines that may be issued by other agencies pursuant to this order.

Sec. 6. *Definitions.* For purposes of this order:

(a) The term "agency" shall be defined as that term is defined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code.

(b) The term "litigation counsel" shall be defined as the trial counsel or the office in which such trial counsel is employed, such as the United States Attorney's Office for the district in which the litigation is pending or a litigating division of the Department of Justice. Special Assistant United States Attorneys are included within this definition. Those agencies authorized by law to represent themselves in court without assistance from the Department of Justice are also included in this definition, as are private counsel hired by any Federal agency to conduct litigation on behalf of the agency or the United States.

Sec. 7. *No Private Rights Created.* This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch in resolving disputes, conducting litigation in a reasonable and just manner, and reviewing legislation and regulations. This order shall not be construed as creating any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any other person. This order shall not be construed to create any right to judicial review involving the compliance or noncompliance of the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any other person with this order. Nothing in this order shall be construed to obligate the United States to accept a particular settlement or resolution of a dispute, to alter its standards for accepting settlements, to forego seeking a consent decree or other relief, or to alter any existing delegation of settlement or litigating authority.

Sec. 8. *Scope.*

(a) *No Applicability to Criminal Matters or Proceedings in Foreign Courts.* This order is applicable to civil matters only. It is not intended to affect criminal matters, including enforcement of criminal fines or judgments of criminal forfeiture. This order does not apply to litigation brought by or against the United States in foreign courts or tribunals.

(b) *Application of Notice Provision.* Notice pursuant to subsection (a) of section 1 is not required (1) in any action to seize or forfeit assets subject to forfeiture or in any action to seize property; (2) in any bankruptcy, insolvency, conservatorship, receivership, or liquidation proceeding; (3) when the assets that are the subject of the action or that would satisfy the judgment are subject to flight, dissipation, or destruction; (4) when the defendant is subject to flight; (5) when, as determined by litigation counsel, exigent circumstances make providing such notice impracticable or such notice would otherwise defeat the purpose of the litigation, such as in actions seeking temporary restraining orders or preliminary injunctive relief; or (6) in those limited classes of cases where the Attorney General determines that providing such notice would defeat the purpose of the litigation.

(c) *Additional Guidance as to Scope.* The Attorney General shall have the authority to issue further guidance as to the scope of this order, except section 3, consistent with the purposes of this order.

Sec. 9. *Conflicts with Other Rules.* Nothing in this order shall be construed to require litigation counsel or any agency to act in a manner contrary to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Tax Court Rules of Practice and Procedure, State or Federal law, other applicable rules of practice or procedure, or court order.

Sec. 10. *Privileged Information.* Nothing in this order shall compel or authorize the disclosure of privileged information, sensitive law enforcement infor-

mation, information affecting national security, or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law.

Sec. 11. *Effective Date.* This order shall become effective 90 days after the date of signature. This order shall not apply to litigation commenced prior to the effective date.

Sec. 12. *Revocation.* Executive Order No. 12778 is hereby revoked.



THE WHITE HOUSE,
February 5, 1996.

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