

ILLINOIS CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT

PREAMBLE & SCOPE

[1] An independent, fair, and impartial judiciary is indispensable to our system of justice. The United States legal system is based upon the principle that an independent, impartial, and competent judiciary, composed of judges with integrity, will interpret and apply the law. Thus, the judiciary plays a central role in preserving justice and the rule of law. Inherent in the Rules contained in the Code of Judicial Conduct (Code) are the precepts that judges, individually and collectively, must respect and honor the judicial office as a public trust and strive to maintain and enhance confidence in the legal system.

[2] Judges should maintain the dignity of judicial office and avoid both impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in their professional and personal lives. They should aspire at all times to conduct that ensures the greatest possible public confidence in their independence, impartiality, integrity, and competence.

[3] The Code establishes standards for the ethical conduct of judges and judicial candidates. The Code is intended to guide and assist judges in maintaining the highest standards of judicial and personal conduct and to provide a basis for regulating their conduct through the Illinois Judicial Inquiry Board and the Illinois Courts Commission.

[4] The Code governs a judge's personal and judicial activities conducted in person, on paper, and by telephone or other electronic means. A violation of the Code may occur when a judge uses the Internet, including social networking sites, to post comments or other materials such as links to websites, articles, or comments authored by others, photographs, cartoons, jokes, or any other words or images that convey information or opinion. Violations may occur even if a judge's distribution of a communication is restricted to family and friends and is not accessible to the public. Judges must carefully monitor their social media accounts to ensure that no communication can be reasonably interpreted as suggesting a bias or prejudice; an ex parte communication; the misuse of judicial power or prestige; a violation of restrictions on charitable, financial, or political activities; a comment on a pending or impending case; a basis for disqualification; or an absence of judicial independence, impartiality, integrity, or competence.

[5] The Code consists of four Canons, numbered Rules under each Canon, and Comments that generally follow and explain each Rule. The Policy and Scope and Terminology sections provide additional guidance in interpreting and applying the Code. The numbering of the Code is patterned on the American Bar Association Model Code of Judicial Conduct (rev. 2010), reserving numbers for provisions not incorporated in Illinois.

[6] The Canons state principles of judicial ethics that all judges must observe. Although a judge may be disciplined only for violating a Rule, the Canons provide important guidance in interpreting the Rules. Where a Rule contains a permissive term, such as "may" or "should," the conduct being addressed is committed to the personal and professional discretion of the judge or candidate in question, and no disciplinary action should be taken for action or inaction within the bounds of such discretion.

[7] The Comments that accompany the Rules serve two functions. First, they provide guidance regarding the purpose, meaning, and proper application of the Rules. They contain explanatory material and, in some instances, provide examples of permitted or prohibited conduct. Comments

neither add to nor subtract from the binding obligations set forth in the Rules. Therefore, when a Comment contains the terms “must” or “shall,” it does not mean that the Comment itself is binding or enforceable; it signifies that the Rule in question, properly understood, is obligatory as to the conduct at issues.

[8] Second, the Canons combined with the Comments identify aspirational goals for judges. To implement fully the principles of this Code as articulated in the Canons, judges should strive to exceed the standards of conduct established by the Rules, holding themselves to the highest ethical standards and seeking to achieve those aspirational goals, thereby enhancing the dignity of the judicial office.

[9] The Rules of the Code are rules of reason that should be applied consistent with constitutional requirements, statutes, other court rules, and decisional law and with due regard for all relevant circumstances. The Rules should not be interpreted to impinge upon the essential independence of judges in making judicial decisions.

[10] Although the black letter of the Rules is binding and enforceable, it is not contemplated that every transgression will result in the imposition of discipline. Whether discipline is imposed should be determined through a reasonable and reasoned application of the Rules and should depend upon factors such as the seriousness of the conduct, the facts and circumstances that existed at the time of the conduct, the extent of any pattern of improper conduct, whether there have been previous violations, and the effect of the conduct upon the judicial system or others.

[11] The Code is not designed or intended as a basis for civil or criminal liability. Nor is it intended to be the basis for litigants to seek collateral remedies against each other or to obtain tactical advantages in proceedings before a court.

TERMINOLOGY

The first time any term listed below is used in a Rule in its defined sense, it is followed by an asterisk (*).

“Contributions” means both financial and in-kind contributions, such as goods, professional or volunteer services, advertising, and other types of assistance, which, if obtained by the recipient otherwise, would require a financial expenditure. See Rules 3.7, 4.1, and 4.4.

“De minimis,” in the context of interests pertaining to disqualification of a judge, means an insignificant interest that could not raise a reasonable question regarding the judge’s impartiality. See Rule 2.11.

“Domestic partner” means a person with whom another person maintains a household and an intimate relationship, other than a person’s legal spouse. See Rule 2.11.

“Economic interest” means ownership of more than a de minimis legal or equitable interest. Except for situations in which the judge participates in the management of such a legal or equitable interest or the interest could be substantially affected by the outcome of a proceeding before a judge, it does not include (1) an interest in the individual holdings within a mutual or common investment fund; (2) an interest in securities held by an educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organization in which the judge or the judge’s spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child serves as a director, an officer, an advisor, or other participant; (3) a deposit in a financial institution or deposits or proprietary interests the judge may maintain as a member of a mutual savings association or credit union or similar proprietary interests; or (4) an interest in the issuer of government securities held by the judge. See Rules 1.3 and 2.11.

“Fiduciary” includes relationships such as executor, administrator, trustee, or guardian. See Rules 2.11, 3.2, and 3.8.

“Impartial,” “impartiality,” and “impartially” mean absence of bias or prejudice in favor of, or against, particular parties or classes of parties, as well as maintenance of an open mind in considering issues that may come before a judge. See Canons 1, 2, and 4 and Rules 1.2, 2.2, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 3.1, 3.12, 4.1 and 4.3.

“Impending matter” is a matter that is imminent or expected to occur in the near future. See Rules 2.9, 2.10, and 4.1.

“Impropriety” includes conduct that violates the law, court rules, or provisions of this Code and conduct that undermines a judge’s independence, integrity, or impartiality. See Canon 1 and Rule 1.2.

“Independence” means a judge’s freedom from influence or controls other than those established by law. See Canons 1 and 4 and Rules 1.2, 3.1, 3.12, 4.1 and 4.3.

“Integrity” means probity, fairness, honesty, uprightness, and soundness of character. See Canons 1 and 4 and Rules 1.2, 3.1, 3.12, 4.1, and 4.3.

“Judicial candidate” means any person, including a sitting judge, who is seeking selection for or retention in judicial office by election or appointment. A person becomes a candidate for judicial

office as soon as such person makes a public announcement of candidacy; declares or files as a candidate with the election or appointment authority; authorizes or, where permitted, engages in solicitation or acceptance of contributions or support; or is nominated for election or appointment to office. See Rules 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4.

“Knowingly,” “knowledge,” “known,” and “knows” mean actual knowledge of the fact in question. A person’s knowledge may be inferred from the circumstances. See Rules 2.11, 2.13, 2.15, 2.16, 3.6, and 4.1.

“Law” encompasses court rules as well as statutes, constitutional provisions, and decisional law. See Rules 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9, 3.1, 3.9, 3.12, 3.14, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5.

“Member of the judicial candidate’s family” means a spouse, domestic partner, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, or other relative or person with whom the judicial candidate maintains a close familial relationship. See Rule 4.1.

“Member of the judge’s family” means a spouse, domestic partner, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, or other relative or person with whom the judge maintains a close familial relationship. See Rules 3.7, 3.8, and 3.11.

“Member of a judge’s family residing in the judge’s household” means any relative of a judge by blood or marriage, or a person treated by a judge as a member of the judge’s family, who resides in the judge’s household. See Rule 2.11.

“Must” when used in a Rule imposes a mandatory duty on a judge to comply with the Rule. When used in a Comment, the term does not mean that the Comment itself is binding or enforceable; it signifies that the Rule in question, properly understood, is obligatory as to the conduct at issue. See Rule 3.8.

“Nonpublic information” means information that is not available to the public. Nonpublic information may include, but is not limited to, information that is sealed by statute or court order or impounded or communicated in camera and information offered in grand jury proceedings, presentencing reports, dependency cases, or psychiatric reports. See Rule 3.5.

“Pending matter” is a matter that has commenced. A matter continues to be pending through any appellate process until final disposition. See Rules 2.9, 2.10, and 4.1.

“Personally solicit” means a direct request made by a judge or a judicial candidate for financial support or in-kind services, whether made by letter, telephone, or any other means of communication. See Rule 4.1.

“Political organization” means a political party or other group sponsored by or affiliated with a political party or candidate, the principal purpose of which is to further the election or appointment of candidates for political office. For purposes of this Code, the term does not include a judicial candidate’s campaign committee created as authorized by Rule 4.4. See Rules 4.1 and 4.3.

“Public election” includes primary and general elections, partisan elections, nonpartisan elections, and retention elections. See Rules 4.1 and 4.3.

“Require,” when used in the context of the Rules prescribing that a judge “require” certain conduct of others, means that a judge is to exercise reasonable direction and control over the conduct of those persons subject to the judge’s direction and control. See Rules 2.8, 2.10, and 2.12.

“Shall” imposes a mandatory duty on a judge to comply with the Rule. When used in a Comment, the term does not mean that the Comment itself is binding or enforceable; it signifies that the Rule in question, properly understood, is obligatory as to the conduct at issue. (Because the term “shall” appears passim, its first use in a Rule is not marked with an asterisk (*).)

“Third degree of relationship” includes the following persons: great-grandparent, grandparent, parent, uncle, aunt, brother, sister, child, grandchild, great-grandchild, nephew, and niece. See Rule 2.11.

CANON 1

A JUDGE SHALL UPHOLD AND PROMOTE THE INDEPENDENCE, INTEGRITY, AND IMPARTIALITY OF THE JUDICIARY AND SHALL AVOID IMPROPRIETY AND THE APPEARANCE OF IMPROPRIETY IN ALL OF THE JUDGE'S ACTIVITIES.

COMMENTS

- [1] An independent and honorable judiciary is indispensable for creating and preserving public trust and confidence in the legal system. This Code shall be construed and applied to further this objective.

RULE 1.1: COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW

A judge shall comply with the law,* including the Code.

RULE 1.2: PROMOTING CONFIDENCE IN THE JUDICIARY

A judge shall act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence,* integrity,* and impartiality* of the judiciary and shall avoid impropriety* and the appearance of impropriety.

COMMENTS

- [1] Public confidence in the judiciary is eroded by improper conduct and conduct that creates the appearance of impropriety. This principle applies to both the professional and personal conduct of a judge.
- [2] A judge should expect to be the subject of public scrutiny that might be viewed as burdensome if applied to other citizens and must accept the restrictions imposed by the Code.
- [3] Conduct that compromises or appears to compromise the independence, integrity, and impartiality of a judge undermines public confidence in the judiciary. Because it is not practicable to list all such conduct, the Rule is necessarily cast in general terms.
- [4] Judges should participate in activities that promote ethical conduct among judges and lawyers, support professionalism within the judiciary and the legal profession, and promote access to justice for all.
- [5] Actual improprieties include violations of law, court rules, or provisions of this Code. The test for appearance of impropriety is whether the conduct would create in reasonable minds a perception that the judge violated this Code or engaged in other conduct that reflects adversely on the judge's honesty, impartiality, temperament, or fitness to serve as a judge.

- [6] A judge should initiate and participate in community outreach activities for the purpose of promoting public understanding of and confidence in the administration of justice. In conducting such activities, the judge must act in a manner consistent with this Code.

RULE 1.3: AVOIDING MISUSE OF THE PRESTIGE OF JUDICIAL OFFICE

A judge shall not misuse the prestige of judicial office to advance the personal or economic interests* of the judge or others or allow others to do so.

COMMENTS

- [1] It is improper to use or attempt to use the judge's position to gain personal advantage or deferential treatment of any kind. For example, it would be improper to allude to judicial status to gain favorable treatment in encounters with traffic officials. Similarly, a judge must not use the judicial title in letterhead, e-mails, or any other form of communication, including social media or social networking platforms, to gain an advantage in conducting personal business.
- [2] Judges may provide a reference or recommendation for an individual based on the judge's personal knowledge. Judicial stationery may be used for references and recommendations.
- [3] Judges may participate in the process of judicial selection, except as otherwise prohibited or restricted by Canon 4.
- [4] [Reserved]

CANON 2

A JUDGE SHALL PERFORM THE DUTIES OF JUDICIAL OFFICE IMPARTIALLY, COMPETENTLY, AND DILIGENTLY.

RULE 2.1: GIVING PRECEDENCE TO THE DUTIES OF JUDICIAL OFFICE

The duties of judicial office, as prescribed by law,* shall take precedence over all of a judge's personal and extrajudicial activities.

COMMENTS

- [1] To ensure that judges are available to fulfill their judicial duties, judges must conduct their personal and extrajudicial activities, including their use of social media or participation on social networking platforms, to minimize the risk of conflicts that would result in frequent disqualification. See Canon 3.
- [2] Although it is not a duty of judicial office unless prescribed by law, judges are encouraged to participate in activities that promote public understanding of and confidence in the justice system.

- [3] Judges are reminded that article VI, section 13(b), of the Illinois Constitution of 1970 requires that a judge “shall devote full time to judicial duties.” See Rule 3.1 concerning a judge’s ability to participate in teaching.

RULE 2.2: IMPARTIALITY AND FAIRNESS

A judge shall uphold and apply the law* and shall perform all duties of judicial office fairly and impartially.

COMMENTS

- [1] To ensure impartiality and fairness to all parties, a judge must be objective and open-minded.
- [2] Although each judge comes to the bench with a unique background and personal philosophy, a judge must interpret and apply the law without regard to whether the judge approves or disapproves of the law in question.
- [3] Good-faith errors of fact or law do not violate this Rule.
- [4] It is not a violation of this Rule for a judge to make reasonable accommodations, consistent with the law and court rules, to ensure pro se litigants the opportunity to have their matters fairly heard.

RULE 2.3: BIAS, PREJUDICE, AND HARASSMENT

- (A) A judge shall perform the duties of judicial office, including administrative duties, without bias or prejudice.
- (B) A judge shall not, in the performance of judicial duties, by words or conduct manifest bias or prejudice or engage in harassment, including but not limited to bias, prejudice, or harassment based upon race, sex, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ethnicity, pregnancy, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation, and shall not permit court staff, court officials, or others subject to the judge’s direction and control to do so.
- (C) Proceedings before the court shall be conducted without manifesting bias or prejudice or engaging in harassment, based upon attributes including but not limited to race, sex, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ethnicity, pregnancy, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation, by or against lawyers, parties, witnesses, or others.
- (D) The restrictions of paragraphs (B) and (C) do not preclude judges or lawyers from making legitimate reference to the listed factors, or similar factors, when they are relevant to an issue in a proceeding.
- (E) A judge shall not retaliate against those who report violations of Rule 2.3.

- (F) A violation of the Supreme Court of Illinois Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy is a violation of this Rule.

COMMENTS

- [1] A judge who manifests bias or prejudice in a proceeding impairs the fairness of the proceeding and brings the judiciary into disrepute.
- [2] Examples of manifestations of bias or prejudice include but are not limited to epithets; slurs; demeaning nicknames; negative stereotyping; attempted humor based upon stereotypes; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; suggestions of connections between race, ethnicity, or nationality and crime; and irrelevant references to personal characteristics. Even facial expressions and body language can convey to parties and lawyers in the proceeding, jurors, the media, and others an appearance of bias or prejudice. A judge must avoid conduct that may reasonably be perceived as prejudiced or biased.
- [3] Harassment is verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward a person based on the characteristics or classes identified in paragraphs (B) and (C).
- [4] Harassment based on sex includes but is not limited to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is unwelcome.
- [5] Rule 2.15 requires judges to take “appropriate action” when they learn of another judge’s misconduct. In considering this obligation, judges should recognize that failing to inform court leadership of an incident may allow a pattern of misconduct to go undetected. Judges may have specific reporting obligations under the Supreme Court of Illinois Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.
- [6] Retaliation is an adverse action, performed directly or through others, that would deter a reasonable person from reporting or participating in the investigation of conduct prohibited by this Rule. The duty to refrain from retaliation includes retaliation against former or current court personnel.

RULE 2.4: EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

- (A) A judge shall not be swayed by public clamor or fear of criticism.
- (B) A judge shall not permit family, social, political, financial, or other interests or relationships to influence the judge’s judicial conduct or judgment.
- (C) A judge shall not convey or permit others to convey the impression that any person or organization is in a position to influence the judge.

COMMENTS

- [1] An independent judiciary requires that judges decide cases according to the law and facts, without regard to whether particular laws or litigants are popular or unpopular with the public, the media, government officials, or the judge's friends or family. Confidence in the judiciary is eroded if judicial decisionmaking is perceived to be subject to inappropriate outside influences.

RULE 2.5: COMPETENCE, DILIGENCE, AND COOPERATION

- (A) A judge shall perform judicial and administrative duties competently and diligently.
- (B) A judge shall cooperate with other judges and court officials in the administration of court business.

COMMENTS

- [1] Competence in the performance of judicial duties requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness, and preparation reasonably necessary to perform a judge's responsibilities of judicial office.
- [2] A judge should seek the necessary docket time, court staff, and resources to discharge all adjudicative and administrative responsibilities.
- [3] Prompt disposition of the court's business requires a judge to be punctual in attending court and expeditious in determining matters under advisement and to take reasonable measures to ensure that court officials, litigants, and their lawyers cooperate to achieve that end.
- [4] In disposing of matters promptly and efficiently, a judge must demonstrate due regard for the rights of parties to be heard and to have issues resolved without unnecessary cost or delay. A judge shall monitor and supervise cases in ways that reduce or eliminate dilatory practices, avoidable delays, and unnecessary costs.

RULE 2.6: ENSURING THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

- (A) A judge shall accord to every person who has a legal interest in a proceeding or that person's lawyer the right to be heard according to law.*
- (B) A judge may encourage parties to a proceeding and their lawyers to settle matters in dispute, but a judge shall not act in a manner that coerces any party.

COMMENTS

- [1] The right to be heard is an essential component of a fair and impartial system of justice. Substantive rights of litigants can be protected only if procedures protecting the right to be heard are observed.

- [2] The judge plays an important role in overseeing the settlement of disputes but should be careful that efforts to further settlement do not undermine any party's right to be heard according to law.
- [3] Judges should be mindful of the effect settlement discussions can have, not only on their objectivity and impartiality but also on the appearance of their objectivity and impartiality. Despite a judge's best efforts, there may be instances when information obtained during settlement discussions could influence a judge's decisionmaking during trial, and in such instances, the judge should consider whether disqualification may be appropriate. See Rule 2.11 (A)(1).

RULE 2.7: RESPONSIBILITY TO DECIDE

A judge shall hear and decide matters assigned to the judge, except when disqualification is required by Rule 2.11 or other law.*

COMMENTS

- [1] Although there are times when disqualification is necessary to protect the rights of litigants and preserve public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary, judges must be available to decide matters that come before the courts. Unwarranted disqualification may bring public disfavor to the court and to the judge personally. The dignity of the court, the judge's respect for fulfillment of judicial duties, and a proper concern for the burdens that may be imposed upon the judge's colleagues require that a judge not use disqualification to avoid cases that present difficult, controversial, or unpopular issues.

RULE 2.8: DECORUM, Demeanor, AND COMMUNICATION WITH JURORS

- (A) A judge shall require order and decorum in proceedings before the court.
- (B) A judge shall be patient, dignified, and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, court staff, court officials, and others with whom the judge deals in an official capacity and shall require similar conduct of lawyers, court staff, court officials, and others subject to the judge's direction and control.
- (C) A judge shall not commend or criticize jurors for their verdict other than in a court order or opinion in a proceeding.

COMMENTS

- [1] The duty to hear all proceedings with patience and courtesy is not inconsistent with the duty imposed in Rule 2.5 to dispose promptly of the business of the court. Judges can be efficient and businesslike while being patient and deliberate.
- [2] Commending or criticizing jurors for their verdict, including on social media or social networking platforms, may imply a judicial expectation in future cases and may impair a juror's ability to be fair and impartial in a subsequent case.
- [3] A judge may meet with jurors who choose to remain at the completion of trial so long

as the judge does not make any remarks that would adversely affect the judge's impartiality.

RULE 2.9: EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

- (A) A judge shall not initiate, permit, or consider ex parte communications or consider other communications made to the judge outside the presence of the parties or their lawyers concerning a pending* or impending matter,* except as follows:
- (1) When circumstances require it, ex parte communication for scheduling, administrative, or emergency purposes, which does not address substantive matters, is permitted, provided:
 - (a) the judge reasonably believes that no party will gain a procedural, substantive, or tactical advantage as a result of the ex parte communication; and
 - (b) the judge makes provision promptly to notify all other parties of the substance of the ex parte communication and gives the parties an opportunity to respond.
 - (2) [Reserved]
 - (3) A judge may consult with court staff and court officials whose functions are to aid the judge in carrying out the judge's adjudicative responsibilities, or with other judges, provided the judge makes reasonable efforts to avoid receiving factual information that is not part of the record and does not abrogate the responsibility personally to decide the matter.
 - (4) A judge may, with the consent of the parties, confer separately with the parties and their lawyers in an effort to mediate or settle matters pending before the judge.
 - (5) A judge may initiate, permit, or consider any ex parte communication when expressly authorized by law* to do so.
- (B) If a judge inadvertently received an unauthorized ex parte communication bearing upon the substance of a matter, the judge shall make provision promptly to notify the parties of the substance of the communication and provide the parties with an opportunity to respond.
- (C) A judge shall not investigate facts in a matter independently and shall consider only the evidence presented and any facts that may properly be judicially noticed.
- (D) A judge shall make reasonable efforts, including providing appropriate supervision, to ensure that this Rule is not violated by court staff, court officials, and others subject to the judge's direction and control.

COMMENTS

- [1] To the extent reasonably possible, all parties or their lawyers shall be included in communications with a judge.
- [2] Whenever the presence of a party or notice to a party is required by this Rule, it is the party's lawyer, or if the party is unrepresented, the party, who is to be present or to whom notice is to be given.
- [3] The proscription against communications concerning a proceeding includes communications with lawyers, law teachers, or other persons who are not participants in the proceeding and communications made or posted on social media or social networking platforms. A judge must make reasonable efforts to ensure that law clerks, court staff, court officials, and others under the judge's direction and control do not violate this Rule.
- [4] A judge may initiate, permit, or consider ex parte communications expressly authorized by law, such as when serving on therapeutic or problem-solving courts, mental health courts, or drug courts. In this capacity, judges may assume a more interactive role with parties, treatment providers, probation officers, social workers, and others.
- [5] A judge may consult with other judges on pending matters but must avoid ex parte discussions of a case with judges who have previously been disqualified from hearing the matter and with judges who have appellate jurisdiction over the matter.
- [6] The prohibition against a judge investigating the facts in a matter extends to information available in every medium, including electronic.
- [7] A judge may consult ethics advisory committees, outside counsel, or legal experts concerning the judge's compliance with this Code.
- [8] Judges who maintain a presence on social media or social networking platforms should be aware of the potential for these sites to become an unintended vehicle for ex parte communications.

RULE 2.10: JUDICIAL STATEMENTS ON PENDING AND IMPENDING CASES

- (A) A judge shall not make any public statement about a matter pending* or impending* in any court.
- (B) A judge shall not, in connection with cases, controversies, or issues that are likely to come before the court, make pledges, promises, or commitments that are inconsistent with the impartial* performance of the adjudicative duties of judicial office.
- (C) A judge shall require court staff, court officials, and others subject to the judge's direction and control to refrain from making statements that the judge would be prohibited from making by paragraphs (A) and (B).

- (D) Notwithstanding the restrictions in paragraph (A), a judge may make public statements in the course of performing official duties or giving scholarly presentations for purposes of legal education, may explain court procedures, and may comment on any proceeding in which the judge is a litigant in a personal capacity.
- (E) Subject to the requirements of paragraph (A), a judge may respond directly or through a third party to allegations in the media or elsewhere concerning the judge's conduct in a matter.

COMMENTS

- [1] This Rule's restrictions on judicial speech are essential to the maintenance of the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary.
- [2] This Rule does not prohibit a judge from commenting on proceedings in which the judge is a litigant in a personal capacity. In cases in which the judge is a litigant in an official capacity, such as a writ of mandamus, the judge must not comment publicly.
- [3] Depending on the circumstances, the judge should consider whether it may be preferable for a third party, rather than the judge, to respond or issue statements in connection with allegations concerning the judge's conduct in a matter. The Rule does not prohibit a judge from responding to allegations concerning the judge's conduct in a proceeding that is not pending or impending in any court.
- [4] Judges who are active on social media or social networking platforms should understand how their comments in these forums might be considered "public" statements implicating this Rule. Judges should be aware of the nature and efficacy of privacy settings offered by social media or social networking platforms.

RULE 2.11: DISQUALIFICATION

- (A) A judge shall disqualify himself or herself in any proceeding in which the judge's impartiality* might reasonably be questioned, including, but not limited to, the following circumstances:
 - (1) The judge has a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party or a party's lawyer or personal knowledge* of facts that are in dispute in the proceeding.
 - (2) The judge knows* that the judge, the judge's spouse or domestic partner,* a person within the third degree of relationship* to either of them, or the spouse or domestic partner of such a person is:
 - (a) a party to the proceeding or an officer, director, general partner, managing member, or trustee of a party;
 - (b) acting as a lawyer in the proceeding;
 - (c) a person who has more than a de minimis* interest that could be substantially affected by the proceeding; or

- (d) likely to be a material witness in the proceeding.
- (3) The judge knowingly, individually, or as a fiduciary* or the judge's spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child, wherever residing, or any other member of the judge's family residing in the judge's household* has an economic interest* in the subject matter in controversy or is a party to the proceeding.
- (4) The judge, while a judge or a judicial candidate,* has made a public statement, other than in a court proceeding, judicial decision, or opinion that commits or appears to commit the judge to reach a particular result or rule in a particular way in the proceeding or controversy.
- (5) The judge:
 - (a) served as a lawyer in the matter;
 - (b) represented any party to the matter while engaged in the private practice of law within a period of seven years following the last date on which the judge represented the party;
 - (c) within the preceding three years was associated in the private practice of law with any law firm or lawyer currently representing any party in the matter (provided that referral of cases when no monetary interest was retained shall not be deemed an association within the meaning of this paragraph);
 - (d) served in governmental employment and in such capacity participated personally and substantially as a lawyer or public official concerning the matter or has publicly expressed in such capacity an opinion concerning the merits of the particular matter;
 - (e) was a material witness concerning the matter; or
 - (f) previously presided as a judge over the matter in another court.
- (B) A judge shall keep informed about the judge's personal and fiduciary economic interests and make a reasonable effort to keep informed about the personal economic interests of the judge's spouse or domestic partner and minor children residing in the judge's household.
- (C) A judge subject to disqualification under this Rule, other than for bias or prejudice under paragraph (A)(1), may disclose on the record the basis of the judge's disqualification and may ask the parties and their lawyers to consider, outside the presence of the judge and court personnel, whether to waive disqualification. If, following the disclosure, the parties and lawyers agree, without participation by the judge or court personnel, that the judge should not be disqualified, the judge may participate in the proceeding. The agreement shall be incorporated into the record of the proceeding.

COMMENTS

- [1] Under this Rule, a judge is disqualified whenever the judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned, regardless of whether any of the specific provisions of paragraphs (A)(1) through (6) apply. For example, the participation in a matter involving a person with whom the judge has an intimate relationship or a member of the judge's staff may require disqualification.
- [2] A judge's obligation not to hear or decide matters in which disqualification is required applies regardless of whether a motion to disqualify is filed.
- [3] The rule of necessity may override the rule of disqualification. For example, a judge might be required to participate in judicial review of a judicial salary statute or might be the only judge available in a matter requiring immediate judicial action, such as a hearing on probable cause or a temporary restraining order. In matters that require immediate action, the judge must disclose on the record the basis for possible disqualification and make reasonable efforts to transfer the matter to another judge as soon as practicable.
- [4] The fact that a lawyer in a proceeding is affiliated with a law firm with which a relative of the judge is affiliated does not itself disqualify the judge. If, however, the judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned under paragraph (A) or the relative is known by the judge to have an interest in the law firm that could be substantially affected by the proceeding under paragraph (A)(2)(c), the judge's disqualification is required.
- [5] A judge should disclose on the record information that the judge believes the parties or their lawyers might reasonably consider relevant to a possible motion for disqualification, even if the judge believes there is no basis for disqualification.
- [6] "Economic interest," as set forth in the Terminology section, means ownership of more than a de minimis legal or equitable interest. Except for situations in which a judge participates in the management of such a legal or equitable interest or the interest could be substantially affected by the outcome of a proceeding before a judge, it does not include:
- (1) an interest in the individual holdings within a mutual or common investment fund;
 - (2) an interest in securities held by an educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organization in which the judge or the judge's spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child serves as a director, officer, advisor, or other participant;
 - (3) a deposit in a financial institution or deposits or proprietary interests the judge may maintain as a member of a mutual savings association or credit union, or similar proprietary interests; or
 - (4) an interest in the issuer of government securities held by the judge.

- [7] A judge’s use of social media or social networking platforms may create the appearance of a relationship between the judge and litigants or lawyers who may appear before the judge. Whether a relationship would cause the judge’s impartiality to “reasonably be questioned” depends on the facts. While the labels used by the social media or social networking platform (e.g., “friend”) are not dispositive of the nature of the relationship, judges should consider the manner in which the rules on disqualification have been applied in traditional contexts and the additional ways in which social media or social networking platforms may amplify any connection to the judge.

RULE 2.12: SUPERVISORY DUTIES

- (A) A judge shall require court staff, court officials, and others subject to the judge’s direction and control to act in a manner consistent with the judge’s obligations under this Code.
- (B) A judge with supervisory authority for the performance of other judges shall take reasonable measures to ensure that those judges properly discharge their judicial responsibilities, including the prompt disposition of matters before them.

COMMENTS

- [1] A judge is responsible for personal conduct and for the conduct of others, such as staff, when those persons are acting at the judge’s direction or control. A judge may not direct court personnel to engage in conduct on the judge’s behalf or as the judge’s representative when such conduct would violate the Code if undertaken by the judge.
- [2] Public confidence in the judicial system depends upon timely justice. To promote the efficient administration of justice, a judge with supervisory authority must take the steps needed to ensure that supervised judges administer their workloads promptly. See III. S. Ct. R. 21(b) (eff. October 1, 2021).

RULE 2.13: ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS AND HIRING

- (A) In making or facilitating administrative appointments and hiring court employees, a judge:
- (1) shall exercise the power of appointment or election impartially* and on the basis of merit; and
 - (2) shall avoid nepotism, favoritism, and unnecessary appointments.
- (B) A judge shall refrain from casting a vote for the appointment or reappointment to the office of associate judge of the judge’s spouse, domestic partner, or of any person known by the judge to be within the third degree of relationship to the judge, the judge’s spouse, or domestic partner (or the spouse or domestic partner of such a person).
- (C) A judge shall not approve compensation of appointees beyond the fair value of services rendered.

COMMENTS

- [1] Unless otherwise defined by law, nepotism is the appointment or hiring of any relative within the third degree of relationship of either the judge or the judge's spouse or domestic partner, or the spouse or domestic partner of such relative.

RULE 2.14: DISABILITY AND IMPAIRMENT

A judge having knowledge* that the performance of a lawyer or another judge is impaired by drugs or alcohol or by a mental, emotional, or physical condition shall take appropriate action, which may include a confidential referral to a lawyer or judicial assistance program.

COMMENTS

- [1] "Appropriate action" means action intended and reasonably likely to help the judge or lawyer in question address the problem and prevent harm to the justice system. Depending upon the circumstances, appropriate action may include, but is not limited to, speaking directly to the impaired person, notifying an individual with supervisory responsibility over the impaired person, or making a referral to an assistance program.
- [2] Taking or initiating corrective action by way of referral to an assistance program may satisfy a judge's responsibility under this Rule. Assistance programs have many approaches for offering help to impaired judges and lawyers, such as intervention, counseling, or referral to appropriate health care professionals. Depending upon the gravity of the conduct that has come to the judge's attention, however, the judge may be required to take other action, such as reporting the impaired judge or lawyer to the appropriate authority,* agency, or body. See Rule 2.15.
- [3] A judge having reliable information that does not rise to the level of knowledge that the performance of a lawyer or another judge is impaired by drugs, alcohol, or other condition may take appropriate action.

RULE 2.15: RESPONDING TO JUDICIAL AND LAWYER MISCONDUCT

- (A) A judge knowing* that another judge has committed a violation of this Code that raises a substantial question regarding the judge's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a judge in other respects shall inform the Illinois Judicial Inquiry Board.
- (B) A judge knowing that a lawyer has committed a violation of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct of 2010 that raises a substantial question regarding the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects shall inform the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (ARDC).
- (C) A judge knowing that another judge has committed a violation of this Code that does not raise a substantial question regarding honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness of a judge shall take appropriate action.

- (D) A judge knowing that a lawyer has committed a violation of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct of 2010 (Ill. S. Ct. Rs., art. VIII) that does not raise a substantial question regarding honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness of a lawyer shall take appropriate action.
- (E) The following provisions apply to judicial mentoring:
- (1) Acts of a judge in mentoring a new judge pursuant to M.R. 14618 (Administrative Order of February 6, 1998, as amended June 5, 2000) and in the discharge of disciplinary responsibilities required or permitted by Canon 3 or the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct of 2010 are part of a judge's judicial duties and shall be absolutely privileged.
 - (2) Except as otherwise required by the Illinois Supreme Court Rules, information pertaining to the new judge's performance that is obtained by the mentor in the course of the formal mentoring relationship shall be held in confidence by the mentor.

COMMENTS

- [1] A judge having knowledge of misconduct committed by another judge or an attorney must take appropriate action to address the misconduct. Paragraphs (A) and (B) impose an obligation on the judge to report to the appropriate disciplinary authority the known misconduct of another judge or a lawyer that raises a substantial question regarding the honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness of that judge or lawyer. Ignoring or denying known misconduct among one's judicial colleagues or members of the legal profession undermines a judge's responsibility to participate in efforts to ensure public respect for the justice system. This Rule limits the reporting obligation to those offenses that an independent judiciary must vigorously endeavor to prevent.
- [2] A judge having knowledge of a violation of the Code or the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct of 2010 that does not raise a substantial question regarding honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness of a judge or lawyer, respectively, is required to take appropriate action under paragraphs (C) or (D). Appropriate action may include, but is not limited to, communicating directly with the judge who may have violated this Code, communicating with a supervising judge, or reporting the suspected violation to the appropriate authority or other agency or body. Similarly, actions to be taken in response to information indicating that a lawyer has committed a violation of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct of 2010 may include but are not limited to communicating directly with the lawyer who may have committed the violation when communicating is consistent with Rule 2.9 ("Ex Parte Communications") and other provisions of this Code, initiating contempt proceedings, or reporting the suspected violation to the appropriate authority. In both cases, the Rule does not preclude a judge from taking or initiating more than a single appropriate disciplinary measure.

RULE 2.16: COOPERATION WITH DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITIES

- (A) A judge shall cooperate and be candid and honest with judicial and lawyer disciplinary agencies.
- (B) A judge shall not retaliate, directly or indirectly, against a person known* or suspected to have assisted or cooperated with an investigation of a judge or lawyer.

COMMENTS

- [1] Cooperation with investigations and proceedings of judicial and lawyer disciplinary agencies, as required in paragraph (A), instills confidence in judges' commitment to the integrity of the judicial system and the protection of the public.

CANON 3

A JUDGE SHALL CONDUCT THE JUDGE'S PERSONAL AND EXTRAJUDICIAL ACTIVITIES TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF CONFLICT WITH THE OBLIGATIONS OF JUDICIAL OFFICE.

RULE 3.1: EXTRAJUDICIAL ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL

A judge may engage in extrajudicial activities, except as prohibited by law* or this Code. However, when engaging in extrajudicial activities, a judge shall not:

- (A) participate in activities that will interfere with the proper performance of the judge's judicial duties;
- (B) participate in activities that will lead to frequent disqualification of the judge;
- (C) participate in activities that would appear to a reasonable person to undermine the judge's independence,* integrity,* or impartiality;*
- (D) engage in conduct that would appear to a reasonable person to be coercive; or
- (E) make use of court premises, staff, stationery, equipment, or other resources, except for incidental use.

COMMENTS

- [1] To the extent that time permits, and judicial independence and impartiality are not compromised, judges are encouraged to engage in appropriate extrajudicial activities. Judges are uniquely qualified to engage in extrajudicial activities that concern the law, the legal system, and the administration of justice, such as by speaking, writing, teaching, or participating in scholarly research projects. In addition, judges are permitted and encouraged to engage in educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, social, recreational, or civic extrajudicial activities not conducted for profit, even when the activities do not involve the law. See Rule 3.7

- [2] Participation in both law-related and other extrajudicial activities helps integrate judges into their communities and furthers public understanding of and respect for courts and the judicial system.
- [3] Discriminatory actions and expressions of bias or prejudice by a judge, even outside the judge's official or judicial actions, are likely to appear to a reasonable person to call into question the judge's integrity and impartiality. Examples include jokes or other remarks that demean individuals based upon their race, sex, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ethnicity, pregnancy, disability, age, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. For the same reason, a judge's extrajudicial activities must not be conducted in connection or affiliation with an organization that practices invidious discrimination. See Rule 3.6.
- [4] While engaged in permitted extrajudicial activities, judges must not coerce others or take action that would reasonably be perceived as coercive. For example, depending upon the circumstances, a judge's solicitation of contributions or memberships for an organization, even as permitted by Rule 3.7(A), might create the risk that the person solicited would feel obligated to respond favorably or would do so to curry favor with the judge.

RULE 3.2: APPEARANCES BEFORE GOVERNMENTAL BODIES AND CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

A judge shall not appear voluntarily at a public hearing before, or otherwise consult with, an executive or a legislative body or official, except:

- (A) in connection with matters concerning the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice;
- (B) in connection with matters about which the judge acquired knowledge or expertise in the course of the judge's judicial duties; or
- (C) when the judge is acting pro se in a manner involving the judge's personal, legal, or economic interests or when the judge is acting in a fiduciary capacity.

COMMENTS

- [1] Judges possess special expertise in matters of law, the legal system, and the administration of justice, and may properly share that expertise with governmental bodies and executive or legislative branch officials.
- [2] In appearing before governmental bodies or consulting with government officials, judges must be mindful that they remain subject to other provisions of this Code, such as Rule 1.3 prohibiting judges from using the prestige of office to advance their own or others' interests; Rule 2.10 governing public comment on pending and impending matters; and Rule 3.1(C) prohibiting judges from engaging in extrajudicial activities that would appear to a reasonable person to undermine the judge's independence, integrity, or impartiality.

- [3] In general, it would be an unnecessary and unfair burden to prohibit judges from appearing before governmental bodies or consulting with government officials on matters that are likely to affect them as private citizens, such as zoning proposals affecting their real property. In engaging in such activities, however, judges must not refer to their judicial positions and must otherwise exercise caution to avoid using the prestige of judicial office.

RULE 3.3: TESTIFYING AS A CHARACTER WITNESS

A judge shall not testify as a character witness in a judicial, administrative, or other adjudicatory proceeding or otherwise vouch for the character of a person in a legal proceeding, except when duly summoned.

COMMENTS

- [1] A judge who, without being subpoenaed, testifies as a character witness abuses the prestige of judicial office to advance the interests of another. See Rule 1.3. Nothing in this Rule will affect or prohibit a judge's ability to provide a letter of recommendation on judicial letterhead for an individual based upon the judge's personal knowledge. See Rule 1.3, Comment [2].

RULE 3.4: APPOINTMENTS TO GOVERNMENTAL POSITIONS

In addition to the restrictions in article VI, section 13, of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, a judge shall not accept appointment to a governmental committee, board, commission, or other governmental position, unless the appointment concerns the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice.

COMMENTS

- [1] Article VI, section 13, of the Illinois Constitution of 1970 prohibits a judge from holding any office under the United States, this State, a unit of local government, or a school board. Rule 3.4 acknowledges this constitutional limitation while implicitly recognizing the value of judges accepting appointments to entities that concern the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice. Even in such instances, however, a judge should assess the appropriateness of accepting an appointment, paying particular attention to the subject matter of the appointment and the availability and allocation of judicial resources, including the judge's time commitments, and giving due regard to the requirements of the independence and impartiality of the judiciary.
- [2] A judge may represent a country, state, or locality on ceremonial occasions or in connection with historical, educational, or cultural activities. Such representation does not constitute acceptance of a government position.

RULE 3.5: USE OF NONPUBLIC INFORMATION

A judge shall not intentionally disclose or use nonpublic information* acquired in a judicial capacity for any purpose unrelated to the judge's judicial duties.

COMMENTS

- [1] In the course of performing judicial duties, a judge may acquire information of commercial or other value that is unavailable to the public. The judge must not intentionally disclose or use such information for personal gain or for any purpose unrelated to judicial duties.
- [2] This Rule is not intended, however, to affect a judge's ability to act on information as necessary to protect the health or safety of the judge or a member of a judge's family, court personnel, attorneys, or other persons if consistent with other provisions of this Code.

RULE 3.6: AFFILIATION WITH DISCRIMINATORY ORGANIZATIONS

- (A) A judge shall not hold membership in any organization that practices invidious discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.
- (B) A judge shall not use the benefits or facilities of an organization if the judge knows* or should know that the organization practices invidious discrimination on one or more of the bases identified in paragraph (A). A judge's attendance at an event in a facility of an organization that the judge is not permitted to join is not a violation of this Rule when the judge's attendance is an isolated event that could not reasonably be perceived as an endorsement of the organization's practices.

COMMENTS

- [1] A judge's public manifestation of approval of invidious discrimination on any basis gives rise to the appearance of impropriety and diminishes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary. A judge's membership in an organization that practices invidious discrimination creates the perception that the judge's impartiality is impaired.
- [2] An organization is generally said to discriminate invidiously if it arbitrarily excludes from membership on the basis of race, sex, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ethnicity, or sexual orientation persons who would otherwise be eligible for admission. Whether an organization practices invidious discrimination is a complex question to which judges should be attentive. The answer cannot be determined from a mere examination of an organization's current membership rolls but, rather, depends upon how the organization selects members, as well as other relevant factors, such as whether the organization is dedicated to the preservation of religious, ethnic, or cultural values of legitimate common interest to its members or whether it is an intimate, purely private organization whose membership limitations could not constitutionally be prohibited.
- [3] When a judge learns that an organization to which the judge belongs engages in invidious discrimination, the judge must resign immediately from the organization.

[4] A judge's membership in a religious organization as a lawful exercise of the freedom of religion is not a violation of this Rule.

[5] This Rule does not apply to national or state military service.

RULE 3.7: PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, CHARITABLE, FRATERNAL, OR CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

(A) Subject to the requirements of Rule 3.1, a judge may participate in activities (i) sponsored by organizations or governmental entities concerned with the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice and (ii) sponsored by or on behalf of educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organizations not conducted for profit, including, but not limited to, the following activities:

- (1) assisting such an organization or entity in planning related to fundraising and participating in the management and investment of the organization's or entity's funds;
- (2) soliciting* contributions* for such an organization or entity, but only from members of the judge's family* or from judges over whom the judge does not exercise supervisory authority;
- (3) soliciting membership for such an organization or entity, even though the membership dues or fees generated may be used to support the objectives of the organization or entity, but only if the organization or entity is concerned with the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice;
- (4) appearing, speaking, receiving an award or other recognition, and permitting the judge's title to be used in connection with a fundraising or other event of such an organization or entity;
- (5) making recommendations to such a public or private fund-granting organization or entity in connection with its programs and activities; and
- (6) serving as an officer, director, trustee, or nonlegal advisor of such an organization or entity, unless it is likely that the organization or entity:
 - (a) will be engaged in proceedings that would ordinarily come before the judge; or
 - (b) will frequently be engaged in adversarial proceedings in the court of which the judge is a member or in any court subject to the appellate jurisdiction of the court of which the judge is a member.

(B) A judge may encourage and solicit lawyers to provide pro bono public legal services.

COMMENTS

- [1] The activities permitted by paragraph (A) generally include those sponsored by or undertaken on behalf of public or private not-for-profit educational institutions and other not-for-profit organizations, including law-related, charitable, and other organizations.
- [2] Before engaging in activities permitted by Rule 3.7, a judge should consider whether the membership and purposes of the organization, or the nature of the judge's participation in or association with the organization, would conflict with the judge's obligation to refrain from activities that reflect adversely upon a judge's independence, integrity, and impartiality.
- [3] Mere attendance at an event, whether or not the event serves a fundraising purpose, does not constitute a violation of paragraph (A)(4) so long as the judge does not engage in direct solicitation. It is also generally permissible for a judge to serve as an usher or a food server or preparer or to perform similar functions at fundraising events sponsored by educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organizations. Such activities are not solicitation and do not present an element of coercion or misuse the prestige of judicial office.
- [3A] A judge may not use social media or social networking platforms to promote the activities of educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organizations when the judge would be prohibited from doing so using another means of communication. For example, just as a judge may not write or telephone nonfamily members or judges over whom the judge has supervisory authority to encourage them to attend organizations' fundraising events, a judge may not promote those events via social media or social networking platforms.
- [4] Identification of a judge's position in law-related, educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organizations on letterhead or written materials used for fundraising or membership solicitation by such an organization or entity does not violate this Rule. The letterhead may list the judge's title or judicial office if comparable designations are used for other persons.
- [5] In addition to appointing lawyers to serve as counsel for indigent parties in individual cases, a judge may promote broader access to justice by encouraging lawyers to participate in pro bono public legal services if in doing so the judge does not employ coercion or misuse the prestige of judicial office. Such encouragement may take many forms, including providing lists of available programs, training lawyers to do pro bono public legal work, participating in events recognizing lawyers who have done pro bono public work, and requesting lawyers handle matters on a pro bono basis.
- [6] For guidance regarding a judge's involvement with political organizations, see Canon 4.

RULE 3.8: APPOINTMENTS TO FIDUCIARY POSITIONS

- (A) A judge shall not accept appointment to serve in a fiduciary* position, such as executor, administrator, trustee, guardian, attorney in fact, or other personal representative, except for the estate, trust, or person of a member of the judge's family and then only if the service will not interfere with the proper performance of judicial duties.
- (B) [Reserved]
- (C) A judge acting in a fiduciary capacity shall be subject to the same restrictions on engaging in financial activities that apply to a judge personally.
- (D) If a person who is serving in a fiduciary position becomes a judge, the new judge must* comply with this Rule as soon as reasonably practicable, but in no event later than one year after becoming a judge.

COMMENTS

- [1] A judge should recognize that other restrictions imposed by this Code may conflict with a judge's obligations as a fiduciary; in such circumstances, a judge should resign as fiduciary. For example, serving as a fiduciary might require frequent disqualification of a judge under Rule 2.11 because a judge is deemed to have an economic interest in shares of stock held by a trust if the amount of stock held is more than de minimis.

RULE 3.9: SERVICE AS ARBITRATOR OR MEDIATOR

A judge shall not act as an arbitrator or a mediator or perform other judicial functions apart from the judge's official duties unless expressly authorized by law.*

COMMENTS

- [1] This Rule does not prohibit a judge from participating in arbitration, mediation, or settlement conferences performed as part of judicial duties. Rendering dispute resolution services apart from those duties, whether or not for economic gain, is prohibited unless it is expressly authorized by law.

RULE 3.10: PRACTICE OF LAW

A judge shall not practice law. A judge may act pro se in all legal matters.

COMMENTS

- [1] A judge may act pro se in all legal matters, including matters involving litigation and matters involving appearances before or other dealings with governmental bodies. A judge must not use the prestige of office to advance the judge's personal or family interests. See Rule 1.3.

RULE 3.11: FINANCIAL, BUSINESS, OR REMUNERATIVE ACTIVITIES

- (A) A judge may hold and manage investments of the judge and members of the judge's family.
- (B) A judge shall not serve as an officer, director, manager, general partner, advisor, or employee of any business entity. A judge, however, may:
 - (1) hold an equity interest in a business closely held by the judge or members of the judge's family or household; or
 - (2) manage a business entity primarily engaged in investment of the financial resources of the judge or members of the judge's family.
- (C) A judge shall cease engaging in those financial activities otherwise permitted under paragraphs (A) and (B) as soon as practicable if they will:
 - (1) interfere with the proper performance of judicial duties;
 - (2) lead to frequent disqualification of the judge;
 - (3) involve the judge in frequent transactions or continuing business relationships with lawyers or other persons likely to come before the court on which the judge serves; or
 - (4) result in violation of other provisions of this Code.

COMMENTS

- [1] Although the Rule forbids a judge from assuming an active role in the management of any business, judges are generally permitted to engage in financial activities, including managing real estate and other investments for themselves or for members of their families. Participation in these activities, like participation in other extrajudicial activities, is subject to the requirements of this Code. For example, it would be improper for a judge to spend time on business activities that interferes with the performance of judicial duties. See Rule 2.1. Similarly, it would be improper for a judge to use the official title or appear in judicial robes in business advertising or to conduct personal business or financial affairs in such a way that disqualification is frequently required. See Rules 1.3 and 2.11.
- [2] Situations that require frequent disqualification of a judge or otherwise violate this Rule may exist at the time of taking judicial office or arise due to a change in circumstances. As soon as practicable without serious financial detriment, divestment of personal investments and other financial interests is required where frequent disqualification or other violations of this Rule might occur.

RULE 3.12: COMPENSATION FOR EXTRAJUDICIAL ACTIVITIES

A judge may accept reasonable compensation for extrajudicial activities permitted by this Code or other law* unless such acceptance would appear to a reasonable person to undermine the judge's independence,* integrity,* or impartiality.*

COMMENTS

- [1] A judge is permitted to accept honoraria, stipends, fees, wages, salaries, royalties, or other compensation for speaking, teaching, writing, and other extrajudicial activities, provided the compensation is reasonable and provided that the source of the payments does not give the appearance of influencing the judge in the performance of judicial duties or otherwise give the appearance of impropriety. The judge should be mindful, however, that judicial duties must take precedence over other activities. See Rule 2.1 and III. Const. 1970, art. VI, § 13(b).
- [2] Compensation derived from extrajudicial activities may be subject to public reporting. See Rule 3.15.
- [3] Judges may not accept payment or other compensation for performing weddings. See III. S. Ct. Rule 40 (eff. Oct. 1, 2014).

RULE 3.13: ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS, LOANS, BEQUESTS, FAVORS, BENEFITS, OR OTHER THINGS OF VALUE

A judge shall not accept any gifts, loans, bequests, benefits, favors, or other things of value, except as follows:

- (1) items with little intrinsic value, such as plaques, certificates, trophies, and greeting cards;
- (2) gifts, loans, bequests, benefits, favors, or other things of value from individuals whose relationship with the judge would require disqualification under Rule 2.11.
- (3) ordinary social hospitality;
- (4) commercial or financial opportunities and benefits, including special pricing and discounts, and loans from lending institutions in their regular course of business, if the same opportunities and benefits or loans are made available on the same terms to similarly situated persons who are not judges;
- (5) rewards and prizes given to competitors or participants in random drawings, contests, or other events that are open to persons who are not judges;
- (6) scholarships, fellowships, and similar benefits or awards, if they are available to similarly situated persons who are not judges, based upon the same terms and criteria;
- (7) books, magazines, journals, audiovisual materials, and other resource materials supplied by publishers on a complimentary basis for official use;

- (8) gifts incident to a public testimonial;
- (9) invitations to the judge and the judge's spouse, domestic partner, or guest to attend without charge:
 - (a) an event associated with a bar-related function or other activity relating to the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice; or
 - (b) an event associated with any of the judge's educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic activities permitted by this Code, if the same invitation is offered to nonjudges who are engaged in similar ways in the activity as is the judge; and
- (10) gifts, loans, bequests, benefits, favors, or other things of value, only if the donor is not a party or other person whose interests have come or are likely to come before the judge, including lawyers who practice or have practiced before the judge.

COMMENTS

- [1] Whenever a judge accepts a gift or other thing of value without paying fair market value, there is a risk that the benefit might be viewed as intended to influence the judge's decision in a case. Rule 3.13 prohibits the acceptance of benefits except in circumstances where the risk of improper influence is low.
- [2] Gift giving between friends and relatives is a common occurrence and ordinarily does not create an appearance of impropriety or cause reasonable persons to believe that the judge's independence, integrity, or impartiality has been compromised. In addition, when the appearance of friends or relatives in a case would require the judge's disqualification under Rule 2.11, there would be no opportunity for a gift to influence the judge's decisionmaking. Paragraph (2) places no restrictions upon the ability of a judge to accept gifts or other things of value from friends or relatives under these circumstances.
- [3] Businesses and financial institutions frequently make available special pricing, discounts, and other benefits, either in connection with a temporary promotion or for preferred customers based upon longevity of the relationship, volume of business transacted, and other factors. A judge may freely accept such benefits if they are available to the general public or if the judge qualifies for the special price or discount according to the same criteria as are applied to persons who are not judges. As an example, loans provided at generally prevailing interest rates are not gifts, but a judge could not accept a loan from a financial institution at below-market interest rates unless the same rate was being made available to the general public for a certain period of time or only to borrowers with specified qualifications that the judge also possesses.
- [4] Rule 3.13 applies only to acceptance of gifts or other things of value by a judge. Nonetheless, if a gift or other benefit is given to the judge's spouse, domestic partner, or member of the judge's family residing in the judge's household, it may be viewed as an attempt to evade Rule 3.13 and influence the judge indirectly. Where the gift or benefit is being made primarily to such other persons and the judge is merely an incidental beneficiary, this concern is reduced. A judge should consider informing family and household members of the restrictions imposed upon judges by this Rule.

- [5] Contributions to a judge’s campaign for judicial office are governed by Rules 4.3 and 4.4 of this Code.
- [6] “Ordinary social hospitality” includes the “routine amenities, favors, and courtesies which are normally exchanged between friends and acquaintances, and which would not create an appearance of impropriety to a reasonable, objective observer.” In *re Corboy*, 124 Ill. 2d 29, 42 (1988). The touchstone of this objective test “is a careful consideration of social custom.” *Id.* Factors relevant to this inquiry include (1) the monetary value of the gift, loan, bequest, or other item transferred from the donor or lender to the judge; (2) the relationship between the judge and the donor or lender; (3) the social practices and customs associated with transfers of the type made between the judge and donor or lender; and (4) the circumstances surrounding the transaction. See *id.* at 42-43.
- [7] Disclosure of economic interests including gifts is governed by Rule 3.15.

RULE 3.14: REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES AND WAIVERS OF FEES OR CHARGES

- (A) Unless otherwise prohibited by Rule 3.1 or other law,* a judge may accept reimbursement of necessary and reasonable expenses for travel, food, lodging, or other incidental expenses or a waiver or partial waiver of fees or charges for registration, tuition, and similar items from sources other than the judge's employing entity, if the expenses or charges are associated with the judge's participation in extrajudicial activities permitted by this Code.
- (B) Reimbursement of expenses for necessary travel, food, lodging, or other incidental expenses shall be limited to the actual costs reasonably incurred by the judge and, when appropriate to the occasion, by the judge's spouse, domestic partner,* or guest.
- (C) [Reserved]

COMMENTS

- [1] Educational, civic, religious, fraternal, and charitable organizations often sponsor meetings, seminars, symposia, dinners, awards ceremonies, and similar events. Judges are encouraged to attend educational programs as both teachers and participants in law-related and academic disciplines in furtherance of their duty to remain competent in the law. Participation in a variety of other extrajudicial activity is also permitted and encouraged by this Code.
- [2] Not infrequently, sponsoring organizations invite certain judges to attend seminars or other events on a fee-waived or partial-fee-waived basis and sometimes include reimbursement for necessary travel, food, lodging, or other incidental expenses. A judge’s decision whether to accept reimbursement of expenses or a waiver or partial waiver of fees or charges in connection with these or other extrajudicial activities must be based upon an assessment of all the circumstances. The judge must undertake a reasonable inquiry to obtain the information necessary to make an informed judgment about whether acceptance would be consistent with the requirements of this Code.

- [3] A judge must be assured that acceptance of reimbursement or fee waivers would appear to a reasonable person not to undermine the judge's independence, integrity, or impartiality. The factors that a judge should consider when deciding whether to accept reimbursement or a fee waiver for attendance at a particular activity include:
- (a) whether the sponsor is an accredited educational institution or bar association rather than a trade association or a for-profit entity;
 - (b) whether the funding comes largely from numerous contributors rather than from a single entity and is earmarked for programs with specific content;
 - (c) whether the content is related or unrelated to the subject matter of litigation pending or impending before the judge or to matters that are likely to come before the judge;
 - (d) whether the activity is primarily educational rather than recreational and whether the costs of the event are reasonable and comparable to those associated with similar events sponsored by the judiciary, bar associations, or similar groups;
 - (e) whether information concerning the activity and its funding sources is available upon inquiry;
 - (f) whether the sponsor or source of funding is generally associated with particular parties or interests currently appearing or likely to appear in the judge's court, thus possibly requiring disqualification of the judge under Rule 2.11;
 - (g) whether differing viewpoints are presented; and
 - (h) whether a broad range of judicial and nonjudicial participants are invited, whether a large number of participants are invited, and whether the program is designed specifically for judges.

RULE 3.15: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A judge shall file annually with the Clerk of the Illinois Supreme Court a verified written statement of economic interests. The contents of, and filing deadline for, the statement shall be as specified by administrative order of this court.

COMMENTS

- [1] The statement of economic interests required by this Rule is intended to (1) maintain and promote public confidence in the integrity, impartiality, fairness, and independence of the judiciary; (2) provide public information bearing on judges' potential conflicts of interest; and (3) foster compliance with the Code. The statement is designed to achieve an appropriate balance with respect to particular information that might reasonably bear on these objectives between the value of public disclosure of that information, on the one hand, and judges' legitimate privacy interests, on the other hand.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

1. The verified written statement of economic interests referred to in Rule 3.15 shall be filed annually by all judges on or before April 30. Statements also shall be filed by every person who becomes a judge, within 45 days after assuming office. However, judges who assume office on or after December 1 and who file the statement before the following April 30 shall not be required to file another statement until the next year.
2. Before the first Monday in March of each year, the Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (Director) shall inform each judge of the requirements of Rule 3.15 and this order and shall provide a copy of the Statement of Economic Interests. The Director shall do the same for each new judge within 10 days of the judge assuming office.
3. The Clerk is authorized to redact any personal information that is not required to be disclosed in the statement.
4. The Clerk shall maintain a publicly available list of all judges and the last date on which each judge filed the statement.
5. The Clerk shall send a judge acknowledgement of receipt of the judge's statement and the date of filing.
6. All statements shall be made available to the public by written request submitted to the Clerk's office. Each person requesting a statement must first fill out a form prepared by the Director specifying the statement requested, identifying the examiner by name, occupation, address, telephone number, and e-mail address, and listing the date of and the reason for the request. Copies of statements will be supplied to persons requesting them on payment of a reasonable fee per page as required by the Clerk. Payment will be in the form required by the Clerk.
7. When a copy of a judge's statement is requested, the Clerk shall promptly send the judge a copy of the completed request form.

STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
REQUIRED BY ILLINOIS CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT (2023) CANON 3, RULE 3.15

INSTRUCTIONS

1. You (the “filing judge”) are required to report economic interests owned by you or your spouse, domestic partner, or minor children living with you (collectively, “Covered Persons”). You shall keep informed about your economic interests and make a reasonable effort to keep informed about the economic interests of the other Covered Persons.
2. Economic interests must be reported as of the “Record Date,” which is December 31 of the year before the date of this Statement.
3. For each category of economic interests, include all assets valued in excess of \$1,000 in which any Covered Person has an ownership interest, including those owned in an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), 401(k) plan, 403(b) plan, 457 plan, deferred compensation plan administered by the State of Illinois, 529 college savings plan, Uniform Gift to Minor Act account, or similar accounts (collectively, “Retirement/Investment Accounts”).
4. With respect to dividends, interest, rent, royalties, or distributions (collectively, “income”), report any income received during the 12-month period before the Record Date. Only report whether income was received, and not any amount.
5. Attach additional pages if the space provided is insufficient.

1. NAME OF FILING JUDGE: _____

2. COURT: _____ DISTRICT/CIRCUIT: _____.

3. CURRENT ECONOMIC INTERESTS.

a. FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

- i. List each financial institution in which any Covered Person has assets valued in excess of \$1,000, including assets held in savings accounts, checking accounts, money market accounts, certificates of deposits, or “Retirement/Investment Accounts” (as defined in Paragraph 3 of the Instructions).
- ii. Do not provide account numbers. Multiple accounts at the same financial institution need not be separately listed.

Financial Institution

Check box if none.

b. STOCKS, BONDS, ETF, AND MUTUAL FUNDS.

- i. List stocks, bonds, exchange traded funds (ETF), and mutual funds valued in excess of \$1,000 owned by a Covered Person, including such assets held in a Retirement/Investment Account (as defined in Paragraph 3 of the Instructions).
- ii. Do not list (1) multiple holdings of the same security (e.g., multiple U.S. Treasury Notes), (2) multiple securities issued by the same issuer, (3) different mutual funds in the same mutual fund family, (4) assets owned by a mutual fund or ETF, or (5) deposits or proprietary interests held as a member of a mutual savings association or credit union.

Name of Issuer or Mutual Fund or ETF Family	Nature of Security (i.e., stock, bond, mutual fund, ETF)

Check box if none.

c. REAL ESTATE.

- i. List all real estate in which any Covered Person has an ownership interest, including a beneficial interest in a land trust.
- ii. For each personal residence of a Covered Person or a Covered Person’s family member, state “personal residence” and do not provide address.

Address (other than for a personal residence)	Type of Property (e.g., single-family residence, condominium, farmland, etc.)	Income Received? (Yes/No)

Check box if none.

- d. PENSION PLANS. List any nonjudicial pension plan in which any Covered Person has an interest. This does not include (1) Individual Retirement Accounts, 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, or 457 plans or (2) any benefits from the Social Security Administration.

Plan Sponsor/Administrator	Income Received? (Yes/No)

Check box if none.

- e. **INTERESTS IN INTANGIBLE PROPERTY.** List any interest valued in excess of \$1,000 in intangible property, not reported above, owned by any Covered Person. This includes, but is not limited to, an interest in any partnership, corporation, limited liability company, trust, copyright, trademark, or chose in action.

Description of Intangible Property	Nature of Interest	Income Received? (Yes/No)

Check box if none.

- f. **EMPLOYMENT.** List every paid employment of a Covered Person, with the exception of the filing judge's judicial employment.

Name of Employer

Check box if none.

- g. **NONINVESTMENT INCOME.** List the nature of all noninvestment income, other than employment income, received by a Covered Person from any one source that totals at least \$1,000 in the 12-month period before the Record Date. Income includes, but is not limited to, fees, commissions, payments for personal services, and royalties. Do not include the amount.

Source of Noninvestment Income	Nature of Noninvestment Income (Commission, Royalty, etc.)

Check box if none.

4. INDEBTEDNESS.

- a. List all creditors to whom amounts in excess of \$1,000 were owed by any Covered Person on the Record Date and identify any sureties or guarantors of any such indebtedness.
- b. Do not include any debt, including credit card debt, that was paid in its entirety within 90 days of when it was incurred. For these purposes, medical or dental expenses are not considered to be incurred until the amount of the Covered Person's financial responsibility is determined after the application of any insurance benefits.
- c. The amount of each listed indebtedness shall be reported by reference to a letter category, as follows: Category A - \$1,000.01-\$5,000; Category B - \$5,000.01-\$15,000; Category C - \$15,000.01-\$50,000; Category D - \$50,000.01-\$100,000; Category E - \$100,000.01-\$250,000; and Category F – greater than \$250,000. This categorization shall be reported as of the Record Date.

Name of Creditor	Valuation Category on Record Date	Identity of any Surety or Guarantor of the Indebtedness

5. RELATIONSHIPS WITH LAWYERS.

- a. Identify all persons, other than Covered Persons, known by the filing judge to be licensed or registered to practice law who, at any time within the 12-month period before the Record Date, was a co-owner with a Covered Person of any economic interest, a co-obligor with or a creditor of a Covered Person, or the payor to a Covered Person of any income, payments, or benefits, required to be disclosed in Paragraphs 3 or 4. State the nature of each economic interest, indebtedness, or income, payments, or benefits and whether it is ongoing or terminated as of the Record Date.

Name of Lawyer	Nature of Economic Interest, Indebtedness, or Income, Payments, or Benefits	Ongoing or Terminated

Check box if none.

- b. Identify all lawyers with whom the filing judge was associated in the private practice of law within three years of the date of this filing. The name of the firm may be substituted where the association was with five or more lawyers.

Name of Lawyer or Law Firm	Address

Check box if none.

- 6. BOARD SERVICE. List every office or directorship held by a Covered Person, regardless of whether compensation is received. Do not include any uncompensated or honorary positions in educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, civic, social or law-related organizations unless those organizations are either conducted for profit or regularly engaged in adversary proceedings in any court.

Name of Organization	Position Held	Compensation Received? (Yes/No)

Check box if none.

7. LITIGATION.

- a. List all court cases or arbitration proceedings known to the filing judge pending on or within 12 months before the Record Date in which a Covered Person either was a party or had more than a de minimis financial interest (i.e., a monetary interest that could not raise a reasonable question as to the judge’s impartiality). Do not include (1) proceedings in which a Covered Person is a party solely in an official capacity, (2) class actions in which a Covered Person is not a named class representative, or (3) motor vehicle offenses that are punishable by fine only.

Case Name, Tribunal, and Case Number

Check box if none.

- b. List all cases in which the filing judge was a referring lawyer with an economic interest that are still pending on the Record Date or that were resolved within three years before the Record Date. Include the name of the lawyer or law firm to which the case was referred.

Case Name, Court Where Pending, and Case Number	Identity of Lawyer or Law Firm to Which the Case Was Referred	Pending Case? (Yes/No)

Check box if none.

8. **FIDUCIARY POSITIONS.** List all fiduciary positions held by the filing judge on the Record Date. Examples include service as a trustee, executor, estate administrator, guardian of the estate, or agent pursuant to a power of attorney for property. Do not include fiduciary positions held for the benefit of a family member of a Covered Person. Identify by name each person, other than a Covered Person, for whom the filing judge is serving as fiduciary.

Fiduciary Position	Name of Person for Whom the Filing Judge Is Serving as Fiduciary

Check box if none.

9. **HONORARIA, REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES, AND WAIVERS OF FEES.** List all honoraria, reimbursement of expenses, and waivers of fees (collectively, “Benefits”) that (a) either individually or in the aggregate from the same provider of the Benefits exceed \$500, and (b) were received by a Covered Person, or a guest of the filing judge in connection with an event at which the Benefits were received, during the 12-month period prior to the Record Date. Do not report (a) waivers of fees to any unit of government or (b) reimbursement or payment of expenses, or provision of resources, by any unit of government. Identify the provider of each Benefit and state the type of the recipient of each Benefit (i.e. filing judge, filing judge’s guest, spouse, domestic partner, or child) rather than the specific name.

The value of each Benefit shall be reported by reference to a letter category, as follows: Category A - \$500-\$2500; Category B - \$2500.01-\$5000; Category C – greater than \$5000.

Identity of Provider of the Benefit	Description of the Benefit	Type of Recipient of the Benefit	Value of the Benefit

Check box if none.

10. **GIFTS.** List all gifts that (a) either individually or in the aggregate from the same donor exceed \$500, and (b) were received by a Covered Person during the 12-month period prior to the Record Date. Do not include gifts between Covered Persons or between Covered Persons and any of their great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews and nieces. Identify the provider of each gift and state the type of the recipient of each gift (i.e., filing judge, spouse, domestic partner, or child) rather than the specific name.

The value of each gift shall be reported by reference to a letter category, as follows: Category A - \$500-\$2500; Category B - \$2500.01-\$5000; Category C – greater than \$5000.

Identity of Provider of the Gift	Description of the Gift	Type of Recipient of the Gift	Value of the Gift

Check box if none.

11. **ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES.** List any economic interest not previously disclosed in this Statement that could create a basis for disqualification of the filing judge under Supreme Court Rule 2.11. Identify the person whose economic interest could create a basis for disqualification, but if that person is a Covered Person state the type of that Covered Person (i.e., filing judge, spouse, domestic partner, or child) rather than the specific name.

Type of Covered Person or Identity of Other Person with an Economic Interest That Could Create a Basis for Disqualification	Nature of Economic Interest

Check box if none.

VERIFICATION

Pursuant to Illinois Code of Judicial Conduct (2023), Canon 3, Rule 3.15, I declare that this Statement of Economic Interests, including any accompanying schedules and statements, has been examined by me and to the best of my knowledge and belief is true, correct, and complete.

(Signature of Filing Judge)

(Date)

(Printed Name of Filing Judge)

CANON 4

A JUDGE OR JUDICIAL CANDIDATE SHALL NOT ENGAGE IN POLITICAL OR CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE INDEPENDENCE, INTEGRITY, OR IMPARTIALITY OF THE JUDICIARY.

RULE 4.1: POLITICAL AND CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC ELECTIONS

- (A) Except as authorized in paragraphs (D)(2) and (F), a judge or judicial candidate shall not:
- (1) act as a leader or hold an office in a political organization;*
 - (2) publicly endorse or publicly oppose another candidate for public office;
 - (3) make speeches on behalf of a political organization; or
 - (4) solicit funds for, or pay an assessment to, a political organization or candidate.
- (B) A judge shall resign from judicial office upon becoming a candidate for a nonjudicial elected office.
- (C) A judicial candidate:
- (1) shall maintain the dignity appropriate to judicial office and act in a manner consistent with the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary;
 - (2) shall prohibit employees and officials who serve at the pleasure of the candidate, and shall discourage other employees and officials subject to the candidate's direction and control, from doing on the candidate's behalf what the candidate is prohibited from doing under the provisions of this Rule;
 - (3) except to the extent permitted by Paragraph (E), shall not authorize, encourage, or knowingly permit members of the judicial candidate's family* or other persons to do for the candidate what the candidate is prohibited from doing under the provisions of this Rule;
 - (4) shall not:
 - (a) make pledges, promises, or commitments that are inconsistent with the impartial performance of the adjudicative duties of judicial office with respect to cases, controversies, or issues that are likely to come before the court; or
 - (b) knowingly misrepresent the identity, qualifications, present position, or other fact concerning the candidate or an opponent.

- (D) A judge or judicial candidate may, except as prohibited by law:
- (1) at any time:
 - (a) purchase tickets for and attend political gatherings;
 - (b) identify as a member of a political party; and
 - (c) contribute to a political organization.
 - (2) when a candidate for public election:*
 - (a) speak to gatherings supporting candidacy;
 - (b) appear in advertisements and other electronic media supporting the candidacy;
 - (c) distribute campaign materials supporting the candidacy;
 - (d) publicly endorse or publicly oppose any judicial candidates in a primary or general election in which the judge or judicial candidate is running and use or allow the use of campaign materials authorized by Paragraph F;
 - (e) respond to personal attacks or attacks on the candidate's record as long as the response does not violate Paragraph (C)(4) and is not reasonably expected to impair the fairness of a matter pending or impending in any court. See Rule 2.10(D).
- (E) A judicial candidate shall not:
- (1) personally solicit* or accept campaign contributions; or
 - (2) use or permit the use of campaign contributions for the private benefit of the candidate or others. See Rule 4.4.
- (F) A candidate for judicial office in a public election may permit the candidate's name or image to be included in campaign materials along with other candidates for elective public office.
- (G) A judge shall not engage in any political activity, except:
- (1) as authorized under Rule 4.1(D) and Rule 4.4;
 - (2) on behalf of measures that concern the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice; or
 - (3) as expressly authorized by law.

- (H) Rule 4.1 applies to all judges and judicial candidates. Judges and successful judicial candidates are subject to judicial discipline for their campaign conduct. Lawyers are subject to lawyer discipline for their campaign conduct that violates Rule 4.1 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct of 2010.

COMMENTS

- [1] A judge plays a role different from that of a legislator or executive branch official. Rather than making decisions based upon the expressed views or preferences of the electorate, a judge makes decisions based upon the law and the facts of every case. Therefore, in furtherance of this interest, judges and judicial candidates must, to the greatest extent possible, be free and appear to be free from political influence and political pressure. This Canon imposes narrowly tailored restrictions upon the political and campaign activities of all judges and judicial candidates.
- [2] When a person becomes a judicial candidate, this Canon becomes applicable.
- [2A] Except as may be specifically authorized in the context of judicial election campaigns, Rule 4.1 prohibits judges and judicial candidates from “publicly” endorsing or making “speeches” on behalf of political candidates or organizations. Comments by judges active on social media or social networking platforms may be considered “public” for purposes of this Rule.

PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

- [3] Public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary is eroded if judges or judicial candidates are perceived to be subject to political influence.
- [4] Paragraphs (A)(2) and (A)(3) prohibit judges and judicial candidates from making speeches on behalf of political organizations or publicly endorsing or opposing candidates for public office, respectively, to prevent them from misusing the prestige of judicial office to advance the interests of others. See Rule 1.3. The prohibition contained in paragraph (A)(3) does not prohibit candidates from campaigning on their own behalf or from endorsing or opposing candidates for judicial office in the same primary or general election.
- [5] Although members of the families of judges and judicial candidates are free to engage in their own political activity, including running for public office, there is no “family exception” to the prohibition in paragraph (A)(2) against a judge or candidate publicly endorsing candidates for public office. A judge or judicial candidate must not become involved in, or publicly associate with, a family member’s political activity or campaign for public office. To avoid public misunderstanding, judges and judicial candidates should take, and should urge members of their families to take, reasonable steps to avoid any implication that they endorse any family member’s candidacy or other political activity. The judge or judicial candidate may, however, attend events advancing the candidacy of the family member and contribute financially to the family member’s campaign to the same extent that a judge or judicial candidate may attend events and contribute money to any other candidate for public office.

- [5A] Because society recognizes the special relationship between members of a family, including the expectation that family members generally support each other in all facets of their lives, there is less danger that a judge's association with a family member's campaign for public office will create the impression that the judge is misusing judicial prestige to support the candidate. For example, a judge may appear in a photograph to be used in a family member's campaign for public office. A judge must not, however, be depicted in judicial robes in a courtroom or other context that suggests the prestige of judicial office is being misused.
- [5B] A judge or judicial candidate should encourage family members in supporting the candidacy of the judge or judicial candidate to adhere to the same standards of political conduct contained in this Canon.
- [6] Judges and judicial candidates retain the right to participate in the political process as voters in any election. Judges and judicial candidates may sign election-related petitions. Judicial candidates may also circulate petitions for themselves or other judicial candidates in the same election but must not circulate petitions for any nonjudicial candidates for public office.

STATEMENTS AND COMMENTS MADE DURING A CAMPAIGN FOR JUDICIAL OFFICE

- [7] Judicial candidates should be scrupulously fair and accurate in all statements made by them and by their campaign committees. Paragraph (C)(4)(b) obligates candidates to refrain from knowingly, or with reckless disregard for the truth, making statements that are false or misleading or that omit facts necessary to make the communication considered as a whole not a false or misleading statement.
- [8] Judicial candidates are sometimes the subject of false, misleading, or unfair allegations made by opposing candidates, third parties, or the media. For example, false or misleading statements might be made regarding the identity, present position, experience, qualifications, or judicial rulings of a candidate. In other situations, false or misleading allegations may be made that bear upon a candidate's integrity or fitness for judicial office. As long as the candidate does not violate paragraph (D)(2)(e), the candidate may make a factually accurate public response. In addition, when false or misleading statements have been made regarding a candidate's opponent, the candidate should disavow the statements and request the source of the statements to cease.
- [9] Subject to paragraph (D)(2)(e), a judicial candidate is permitted to respond directly to false or misleading allegations made against him or her. The candidate should consider whether it is preferable for someone else to respond if the allegations relate to a pending case.
- [10] Paragraph (C)(4)(a) prohibits judicial candidates from making comments that might impair the fairness of pending or impending judicial proceedings. This provision does not restrict arguments or statements to the court or jury by a lawyer who is a judicial candidate or rulings, statements, or instructions by a judge that may appropriately affect the outcome of a matter.

PLEDGES, PROMISES, OR COMMITMENTS INCONSISTENT WITH IMPARTIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE ADJUDICATIVE DUTIES OF JUDICIAL OFFICE

- [11] The role of a judge is different from that of a legislator or executive branch official, even when the judge is subject to public election. Campaigns for judicial office must be conducted differently from campaigns for other offices. The narrowly drafted restrictions upon political and campaign activities of judicial candidates provided in Canon 4 allow candidates to conduct campaigns that provide voters with sufficient information to permit them to distinguish between candidates and make informed electoral choices.
- [12] Paragraph (C)(4)(a) makes applicable to both judges and judicial candidates the prohibition that applies to judges in Rule 2.10(B) relating to pledges, promises, or commitments that are inconsistent with the impartial performance of the adjudicative duties of judicial office.
- [13] The making of a pledge, promise, or commitment is not dependent upon, or limited to, the use of any specific words or phrases; instead, the totality of the statement must be examined to determine if a reasonable person would believe that the candidate for judicial office has specifically undertaken to reach a particular result. Pledges, promises, or commitments must be contrasted with statements or announcements of personal views on legal, political, or other issues, which are not prohibited. When making such statements, a judge should acknowledge the overarching judicial obligation to apply and uphold the law without regard to any personal views.
- [14] A judicial candidate may make promises related to judicial organization, administration, and court management, such as a promise to dispose of a backlog of cases, start court sessions on time, or avoid favoritism in appointments and hiring. A candidate may also pledge to take action outside the courtroom, such as working toward an improved jury selection system or advocating for more funds to improve the physical plant and amenities of the courthouse.
- [15] Judicial candidates who respond to questions or questionnaires or requests for interviews may have their responses viewed as improper pledges, promises, or commitments. See Comment 13. To avoid violating paragraph (D)(2)(e), candidates who respond should give assurances that they will keep an open mind and will carry out their adjudicative duties faithfully and impartially. Candidates who do not respond may state their reasons such as the danger that answering might be perceived by a reasonable person as undermining a successful candidate's independence or impartiality or that it might lead to frequent disqualification. See Rule 2.11.

RULE 4.2: RESERVED

[Reserved]

RULE 4.3: ACTIVITIES OF CANDIDATES FOR APPOINTIVE JUDICIAL OFFICE

A candidate for appointment to judicial office shall:

- (A) maintain the dignity appropriate to judicial office and act in a manner consistent with the independence,* integrity,* and impartiality of the judiciary;
- (B) prohibit employees and officials who serve at the pleasure of the candidate, and discourage other employees and officials subject to the candidate's direction and control, from doing on the candidate's behalf what the candidate is prohibited from doing under the provisions of this Rule;
- (C) A candidate shall not:
 - (1) make pledges, promises, or commitments that are inconsistent with the impartial performance of the adjudicative duties of judicial office with respect to cases, controversies, or issues that are likely to come before the court; or
 - (2) knowingly* or with reckless disregard for the truth, make any false or misleading statement in connection with:
 - (a) an application for appointment; or
 - (b) the identity, qualifications, present position, or other fact concerning the candidate; or
 - (c) except to the extent permitted by Rule 4.1(E), authorize, encourage, or knowingly permit members of the judicial candidate's family or other persons to do for the candidate what the candidate is prohibited from doing under the provisions of this Rule.
- (D) A candidate for appointment to judicial office may, except as prohibited by law:*
 - (1) at any time:
 - (a) purchase tickets for and attend political gatherings;
 - (b) personally identify as a member of a political party; and
 - (c) contribute to a political organization.

COMMENTS

- [1] When seeking support or endorsement or when communicating directly with an appointing or confirming authority, a candidate for appointive judicial office must not make any pledges, promises, or commitments that are inconsistent with the impartial performance of the adjudicative duties of the office. See Rule 4.1(D)(4)(a).

- [2] “Appointment to judicial office” means appointment, assignment, or recall to any judicial office under article VI of the Illinois Constitution of 1970.

RULE 4.4: CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES

- (A) A judicial candidate subject to public election may establish a campaign committee to manage and conduct a campaign for the candidate, subject to the provisions of this Code. The candidate is responsible for ensuring that the campaign committee complies with applicable provisions of this Code and other applicable law.*
- (B) A judicial candidate subject to public election shall direct the campaign committee:
- (1) to solicit and accept campaign contributions* only as permitted by law;
 - (2) not to solicit or accept contributions for a campaign more than 1 year before the applicable primary, general, or retention election, nor more than 90 days after the last election in which the candidate participated; and
 - (3) to comply with all applicable campaign finance laws.

COMMENTS

- [1] Judicial candidates are prohibited from personally soliciting campaign contributions or personally accepting campaign contributions. See Rule 4.1(A)(8). This Rule recognizes that, in many jurisdictions, judicial candidates must raise campaign funds to support their candidacies and permits candidates, other than candidates for appointive judicial office, to establish campaign committees to solicit and accept reasonable financial contributions or in-kind contributions.
- [2] Campaign committees may solicit and accept campaign contributions, manage the expenditure of campaign funds, and generally conduct campaigns. To the extent possible, campaign committees should manage campaign finances to avoid deficits that might necessitate postelection fundraising. Candidates are responsible for compliance with the requirements of election law and other applicable law and for the activities of their campaign committees.
- [3] The campaign committee may solicit and accept campaign contributions from lawyers and others who might appear before the candidate. The candidate should instruct the campaign committee to be cautious in connection with such contributions so it does not create grounds for disqualification. See Rule 2.11.
- [4] During the campaign, the candidate and the campaign committee should be aware that a contribution may affect the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judge and may create grounds for disqualification if the candidate is elected to office.

RULE 4.5: ACTIVITIES OF JUDGES WHO BECOME CANDIDATES FOR NONJUDICIAL OFFICE

- (A) Upon becoming a candidate for a nonjudicial elective office, a judge shall resign from judicial office, unless permitted by law* to continue to hold judicial office. A person becomes a candidate for nonjudicial office by (1) making a public announcement of candidacy, (2) declaring or filing as a candidate with the election authority, (3) authorizing or, where permitted, engaging in solicitation or acceptance of contributions or support, or (4) being nominated for election. A judge may continue to hold office while a candidate for election to or serving as a delegate in a state constitutional convention.
- (B) Upon becoming a candidate for a nonjudicial appointive office, a judge is not required to resign from judicial office, provided that the judge complies with the other provisions of this Code.

COMMENTS

- [1] In campaigns for nonjudicial elective public office, candidates may make pledges, promises, or commitments related to positions they would take and ways they would act if elected to office. Although appropriate in nonjudicial campaigns, this manner of campaigning is inconsistent with the role of a judge, who must remain fair and impartial. The potential for misuse of judicial office, and the political promises that the judge may make in the course of campaigning for nonjudicial elective office, together dictate that a judge who wishes to run for such an office must resign upon becoming a candidate.
- [2] The “resign to run” rule set forth in paragraph (A) ensures that a judge cannot use the judicial office to promote such candidacy and eliminates any potential issue of postcampaign retaliation by a judge defeated in an election. When a judge is seeking appointive nonjudicial office, however, the dangers are not sufficient to warrant imposing the “resign to run” rule.