



Wisconsin Municipal Judges Association

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February 10, 2020

Clerk
Wisconsin Supreme Court
Attention: Deputy Clerk – Rules
P.O. Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701-1688

Re: Comments Regarding Rule Petition 19-23

Dear Clerk:

The Wisconsin Municipal Judges Association is comprised of the vast majority of the approximately 240 municipal courts across the State of Wisconsin, handling about 500,000 traffic and ordinance violations each year. The Association is pleased to write in support of Rule Petition 19-23, which would essentially adopt three modifications to the Wisconsin Code of Judicial Conduct to bring them in line with the Model Code of Judicial Conduct.

As noted in the supplemental memo accompanying the petition, the proposal contained in the petition came about, in part, through a fairly extensive review of statutes and rules by the Municipal Court Subcommittee of the Committee of Chief Judges. The Subcommittee, which contained two of our members, Judges Jason Hanson and Todd Meurer, identified that the Wisconsin Code of Judicial Conduct, while robust, would be improved by strengthening the provisions described in the petition.

Specifically, the changes would extend a judge's obligation to act "with patience, dignity, and courtesy" while fulfilling adjudicative responsibilities so that this obligation would also apply to all of the judge's official duties, such as in the performance of administrative duties. The changes would impose a requirement to cooperate with other judges and court officials, instead of treating cooperation as a suggestion. Lastly, the petition would create an anti-retaliation clause, in order to protect individuals who cooperate with an investigation of a judge or lawyer.

It seems obvious that these changes are appropriate and will improve the functioning of the court system, as well as the public perception of how the system operates. Accordingly, please accept these comments as an expression of the Wisconsin Municipal Judges Association's unqualified support for the petition.

Sincerely,

Robert Kupfer
President
Wisconsin Municipal Judges Association