

## Judicial Ethics – Standing Committee

### Jurisdiction

Offer analysis and guidance concerning the Michigan Code of Judicial Conduct, and, to the extent that they relate to judicial conduct in Michigan, to provisions of the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct, the ABA Code of Judicial Conduct, and other applicable standards of professional conduct, as well as emerging issues of professional conduct affecting judges and judicial candidates by:

- Drafting informal opinions on judicial ethics published on the State Bar of Michigan website
- Drafting proposed formal opinions for consideration by the Board of Commissioners
- Making recommendations concerning amendments to the Michigan Code of Judicial Conduct and other standards professional conduct, on the committee’s own initiative or upon request by the Board of Commissioners or Representative Assembly
- Meeting biennially with the Judicial Tenure Commission and the leadership of the Michigan Judicial Institute
- Determining how the committee’s work might interact with and support work of the Professional Ethics, Lawyers and Judges Assistance, Character and Fitness, and Client Protection Fund committees, including through conferring and coordinating regularly with them on trends, data, insights, and **metrics**
- Being aware of and discuss **metrics** measuring the effectiveness of national and state efforts to reduce behavior leading to judicial discipline and promote civility.

**Committee Chair:** Judge Terry Clark

**Staff Liaisons:** Danon Goodrum-Garland, Nkrumah Johnson-Wynn, Alecia Ruswinckel, and Karen Spohn

**Meetings:** In-person: 2; Electronic or phone meetings: 1

### Committee Activities

1. Drafting and publishing ethics opinions, articles, and FAQs.  
*Goal 3: Strategy 2: Educating members on ethical rules and regulations*
2. Make recommendations for amendments to the Michigan Conduct of Judicial Conduct  
*Goal 3: Strategy 1: Working with our partners to effectively regulate the legal profession in Michigan*
3. Participate in and support special committees and/or projects, e.g., the Professionalism Summit, the Ad Hoc Workgroup on Professionalism, and other special projects as requested.  
*Goal 3: Strategy 1: Working with our partners to effectively regulate the legal profession in Michigan*

### **Future Committee Activities**

The Committee has worked with the Bureau of Elections to address some ethical concerns regarding judicial campaigns and will continue to look for ways to educate judicial officers and candidates for judicial positions of the ethical implications of their campaign conduct and activities. The Committee is also working on a major social media project. It is drafting a series of ethics opinions on the ethical use of social media by judicial officers. In addition, the Committee plans to engage in a wholesale review of the MCJC in conjunction with the ABA Code of Judicial Conduct to determine if it should make recommendations for amendments. The Committee plans to strengthen its relationship with the Judicial Tenure Commission and the Michigan Judicial Institute through discussions with their respective Executive Directors to determine areas where additional ethics opinions, articles, or other resources may help educate judicial officers on how to avoid unethical conduct.

### **Special Committee Characteristics**

Members are nominated by and drawn from among the membership of the Michigan Judges Association, the Michigan Probate Judges Association, the Michigan District Judges Association, the Michigan Association of District Court Magistrates, the Judicial Section Council, and the Referee Association of Michigan.