



# WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF LAWYERS

*Promoting Public Interest and Pro Bono Service*

March 1, 2016

## HONORARY BOARD

Nan Aron  
Hon. Anna Blackburne-Rigsby  
Roderic V.O. Boggs  
Brooksley Born  
Katherine S. Broderick  
Avis Buchanan  
Peter Edelman  
Marc Efron  
Patty Mullahy Fugere  
Katia Garrett  
Elliot Minberg  
Blake D. Morant  
James Sandman  
Joseph M. Sellers  
Virginia E. Sloan  
Jonathan Smith  
Paul M. Smith  
Nkechi Taifa  
William Treanor

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Paul S. Lee  
Vice President: Kelly Voss  
Communications: Gregory Lipper  
Secretary: Jaya Saxena  
Treasurer: Jennifer M. Swedish

Julie K. Abbate  
Nicole Austin-Hillery  
Dena Bauman  
Evelyn L. Becker  
Daniel Bruner  
Nancy E. Drane  
Kyle J. Fiet  
Karen T. Grisez  
Susan M. Hoffman  
Steven P. Hollman  
Allison M. Holt  
Philip W. Horton  
Christina H. Jackson  
Sara Jackson  
Barbara K. Kagan  
Amelia Kegan  
Mary C. Kennedy  
Anne King  
Mark L. Kovner  
Chinh Q. Le  
Marcia Tavares Maack  
Joy P. Moses  
Robin C. Murphy  
Taryn Wilgus Null  
Linda E. Perle  
Golda Philip  
James W. Rubin  
Lawrence A. Schneider  
Amy Senier  
David Steib  
Tanya Senanayake  
Mia Sussman  
Patricia L. Stasco  
Elizabeth Symonds  
Jennifer Tschirch  
Marsha Tucker  
Gwendolyn Washington  
Daria J. Zane  
David Zvenyach

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nancy A. Lopez

[cynthia.g.wright@usdoj.gov](mailto:cynthia.g.wright@usdoj.gov)

Ms. Cynthia G. Wright

Chair

The Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law  
430 E Street, N.W. Room 123  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Wright and Members of The Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law:

Washington Council of Lawyers supports the ideas expressed in the comments of the D.C. Access to Justice Commission and the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center regarding the proposed revisions to Rule 49 (c). It is our understanding that the D.C. Consortium of Legal Services Providers also is in agreement with the proposed Rule 49 (c) changes.

Specifically, we support the amendment of the rule: 1) to permit active attorneys who are members of the bars of states or territories other than D.C. to perform pro bono service; 2) to permit inactive D.C. Bar members and inactive attorneys who are members of the bars of states or territories other than D.C. to perform pro bono service; 3) to permit law school graduates employed by PDS or non-profit organizations providing legal services to individuals of limited means to practice while their bar applications are pending and, 4) to streamline the technical requirements of Rule 49 (c), especially for attorneys from the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, and legal service organizations who, when they begin to practice in D.C., may maintain full-time active caseloads pursuant to Rule 49 for several months while awaiting admission to the D.C. Bar.

Washington Council of Lawyers is a voluntary bar association that was founded in 1971. Our mission is to promote the practice of pro bono and public interest law. Our membership includes a broad range of lawyers, legal professionals, law students and others committed to advancing issues important to the public interest community. We work to ensure that our justice system serves everyone, including those who are poor or marginalized.

We believe the proposed amendments to Rule 49 (c) will encourage pro bono service and expand the availability of quality legal representation for persons of limited means. We note that the provisions proposed by

the DC Access to Justice Commission permitting law school graduates affiliated with the Public Defender Service or a non-profit organization providing legal services to individuals of limited means to practice while their bar applications are pending would significantly expand the resources that legal services organizations can dedicate to representing people who would otherwise be unable to afford the costs of legal representation.

It is our view that the thrust of the comments from the D.C. Access to Justice Commission and the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center are substantially identical. We concur with the D.C. Access to Justice Commission that re-organizing the existing rule, and harmonizing the language across provisions, will clarify the rule, and make it easier for attorneys to apply the rule to their particular situation.

We appreciate the significant work that the D.C. Access to Justice Commission and the D.C. Pro Bono Center have put into their comments, and the opportunity to lend our support to their proposals.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul S. Lee  
President, Washington Council of Lawyers

Cc:

Derek Mitchell  
Director, The Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law  
[dmitchell@dcapeals.gov](mailto:dmitchell@dcapeals.gov).