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In Re: Amendments to the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration- Parental
Leave

Case No: SC18-1554

To Whom It May Concern;

This correspondence is being sent in response to the request for Florida bar members to submit comment on the proposed amendment to the rule of judicial administration.

Frankly, the fact that this rule is even up for debate proves how much it is needed. If judges, opposing counsel, clients, partners, managers and everyone else touching the legal system gave deference to a request for maternity leave, this rule would already be part of the fabric of society. The recent social trends in the MeToo and Time's Up movements show that gender equality is not where it should be in a developed society. Ask around in a group of female attorneys if they have ever been given resistance at a request for maternity leave, and you will be astonished at the overwhelming response. Day in and day out women face resistance just by virtue of our gender. Attorneys are regularly denied continuance from judges for maternity leave, which is why we simply can not leave it up to judicial discretion.

At no point in time has the pay gap ever been closed, but this rule may take us one step closer. The plain sad truth is that family obligations and maternity leave are one of the reasons for lower wages paid to women. If a woman has to leave work for ¼ of the year to push a human out of her body, and she has more than one child, she has potentially set her career back for months or years. Offers for partnership and bonuses are passed over when a woman has been out for more time than her male counterparts. However, if this rule was in place, then no one else involved with the case would be able to proceed without her. This rule would serve to change the stigma that surrounds maternity leave. Men do not know the struggle that is choosing between career ambitions and one's own fertility. However, this is a choice we must make every day. If we start a family too soon, then we may set ourselves back a decade on our career. However, if we wait, we may lose the opportunity of parenthood.

RECEIVED, 10/19/2018 03:18:25 PM, Clerk, Supreme Court

The United States is founded on the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Giving life and raising a family is at the core of those rights and there should be no measure limiting an attorney's right to pursue these as well.

Please support the proposed rule amendment. Make your colleagues, sisters, mothers, and daughters proud.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

Cathy Cole, Esq.

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