

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

IN RE: AMENDMENT TO
RULE REGULATING
THE FLORIDA BAR 6-10.3.

Case No. SC21-284

COMMENTS OF THE FLORIDA CIVIL LEGAL AID ASSOCIATION

The Florida Civil Legal Aid Association, by and through undersigned counsel, hereby files the following comments in this matter.

The Florida Legal Aid Association (FCLAA) is a membership organization composed of the executive leadership of twenty-nine of Florida's civil legal aid programs. It represents the interests of the civil legal aid firms throughout Florida and, by extension, the interests of the low-income and at-risk Floridians served by civil legal aid. FCLAA's purpose is to promote collaboration within our community to achieve access to justice and equity in the law.

FCLAA's client community, like the State of Florida as a whole, is extremely diverse in race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, as well as many socio-economic factors. Our client community broadly includes the

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working poor in the tourism and hospitality industries that are critical to Florida's economy.

FCLAA attorneys require Continuing Legal Education (CLE) opportunities that will maintain their competency and increase their capacity to meet the emerging needs of Florida's diverse community. To achieve this, legal aid attorneys require access to varied CLE programs that not only train attorneys on the changing law governing the areas in which they advocate but also provide attorneys with the necessary training to communicate with and represent diverse clients in a culturally competent manner. For these reasons, the FCLAA fully supports the comments submitted by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC).¹ FCLAA further anticipates this proposed rule change will make it more difficult to find CLE approved trainings relevant to the specialized practice areas in which many legal aid attorneys represent clients.

Additionally, as stated by many of the commenters, the Florida Bar Business Law Section policy is not a quota as it does not exclude

¹ Of the twenty-nine FCLAA members, the following two members do not support these comments: Seminole County Bar Association Legal Aid Society and Northwest Florida Legal Services.

panelists - but rather provides guidance for minimum participation for minority panelists. On the contrary, the goal of the policy is to ensure inclusion of minority panelists, (so that our CLE presentations might aspire to reflect the reality of Florida's population.) Finally, the policy even provides for a broad exception to the requirement.

The FCLAA respectfully requests that the Court reconsider its preliminary ruling on amendment to Rule 6-10.3 and the Florida's Bar CLE Diversity Policy and withdraw its Order.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Monica Vignes-Pitan

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing was filed with the Clerk of Court on July 15, 2021, via the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, which will serve a notice of electronic filing to all counsel of record.

/s/ Monica Vignes-Pitan

MONICA VIGUES-PITAN

I HEREBY CERTIFY that this document complies with the appropriate font requirements.

/s/ Monica Vignes-Pitan

MONICA VIGUES-PITAN