

**From:** [Katherine Rosa Dixon](#)  
**To:** [AO Code and Conduct Rules](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment on Code and JC&D Rules  
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Katherine Dixon

On behalf of herself as a private citizen

Commenting on both the changes to the Code and JC&D Rules

Dear committee members,

I particularly would like to commend the tone of non-discrimination and intolerance for harassment throughout the Code of Conduct. Canon 2A introduces an important protection for those serving in the judicial field. Canon 3B(4) explicitly spells out the definition of conduct that will be considered harassment under the new code, including protections for sexual harassment and assault. It is also strengthened by the definition in Article II Rule 4 of the JC&D in Section (a)(2)(A). This is followed by a strengthening of the application of this code of conduct in the official lives of judges and in their personal lives in Article II Section (a)(7) in Rule 4 of the JC&D, which I believe helps inspire confidence in their ability to dole out the law in equal measure without threat or discrimination. I approve of these changes. I am glad the leeway to “[be] repeatedly and publicly discourteous to a spouse (not including physical abuse)” was removed from the JD&C’s Rule 3(h)(2), since it left an opening for verbal abuse and harassment. I was also glad at the inclusion of more ambiguous language under Article V Rule 11 Section (c)(1), which now allows the chief justice more digression for continuing to pursue a serious complaint even if it falls under one of the categories listed (A-G).

I do have a comment on Canon 5 of the Code, “A judge should refrain from political activity.” I understand how “political organization” is defined in the commentary relies on the dichotomy of the political parties in America; however, judges in my home district (Sardis, Mississippi) are voted on. Although these judges do not take on the affect of either Democrat or Republican, they are still politically motivated to keep the general public happy with their decisions in order to get re-elected. I would argue when judges are put in a position of pleasing the public in order to keep their jobs, campaigning, and being elected to hold their position that they are just as politically motivated as they would be holding the arbitrary titles of “Democrat” and “Republican.” This is something I would like to see reformed in the next version of the Code.

Sincerely,

Katherine Dixon