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FROM:

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May 17, 2019

Clerk of the Supreme Court
P.O. Box 1688
110 East Main Street, Suite 215
Madison, WI 53701

RE: Petition 19 -16 (to Amend Wis. Stat. Chapter 802)

Dear Honorable Justices:

I write in support of the above-referenced Petition. The Petition requests that the Court amend the Rules of Civil Procedure to restore the important role of "ghostwriting," a practice in limited scope legal representation of *pro bono* clients.

I have engaged in *pro bono* legal work throughout my 30-year legal career. In the past five years, I have provided about 250 hours of such work per year, through organizations that include the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic, Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation and several others.

I know attorneys who are willing to do limited representation *pro bono* work but will not draft documents if they are required to provide their name and bar number on said documents. I sometimes do provide my name and bar number on documents I draft for *pro bono* clients. However, there are times that I do not wish to do so for various reasons, including: avoiding future appearances of conflicts of interest in my private practice; concerns that clients may believe my representation is ongoing; and the possibility of someone other than me making changes to the document after I drafted it.

From my perspective, the 2018 amendment of Wis. State. Sec. 802.05(2m) creates a significant disservice to an underserved group of legal consumers, especially those who utilize brief legal advice clinics. These clinics provide very important services to parties who otherwise would be wholly unrepresented through the legal process causing delay, confusion, and inefficiency in the court system. I can say this from experience and with conviction, having volunteered in such clinics dozens of times over the past five years.

I urge you to restore Sec. 802.05(2m) to its prior (pre-2018) iteration, so as to allow ghostwriting, which enables volunteer attorneys to provide a greater level of *pro bono* services to low-income and disadvantaged community members, who desperately need those services.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael R. Burton".

Atty. Michael R. Burton

State Bar. No 1001388