
Supreme Court of Wisconsin



IN RE AMENDMENTS TO SCR 60.04(4)-(8)
CONCERNING JUDICIAL CAMPAIGN-RELATED RECUSAL RULES

Rule Petition No. 26-01
Filed April 6, 2026

The Court entered the following order on this date:

On January 30, 2026, the Honorable Richard G. Niess filed a rule petition on behalf of a group of retired circuit court judges that asks the court to amend Supreme Court Rules (SCR) 60.04(4), (5), (6), (7), and (8), relating to campaign-related judicial recusals. The petition proposes making recusal mandatory in cases where a judge knows or reasonably should know that: 1) any support of the judge’s candidacy for office or a contribution to the judge’s campaign committee; or 2) the sponsorship of an independent expenditure or issue advocacy communication (“independent communication”), by an individual or entity, raises a reasonable concern about the judge’s ability to be impartial. The petition suggests nine factors which should be considered in determining impartiality. The petition also includes a procedure for addressing recusals, including ruling on the record on the question of recusal, stating the reasons for recusing or declining to recuse, and addressing the facts, circumstances, and arguments presented by any party.

IT IS ORDERED that a public hearing on the petition shall be held in the Supreme Court Hearing Room in the State Capitol, Madison, Wisconsin, on June 4, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.

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IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the court's open administrative conference for the matter shall be held the same day, following the public hearing.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that notice of the hearing be given by a publication of a copy of this order and of the petition in the official state newspaper once each week for three consecutive weeks, and in an official publication of the State Bar of Wisconsin not more than 60 days nor less than 30 days before the date of the hearing.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the full text of the proposed rules, including changes, if any, in existing rules, shall be placed on the Internet site maintained by the director of state courts for the supreme court. *See* www.wicourts.gov/scrules/pending.htm.

Dated this 6th of April, 2026, at Madison, Wisconsin.

Samuel A. Christensen
Clerk of Supreme Court