



## MILWAUKEE OFFICE

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November 30, 2020

Deputy Clerk-Rules  
P.O. Box 1688  
Madison, WI 53701-1688  
Via: [clerk@wicourts.gov](mailto:clerk@wicourts.gov)

**RE: Rule Petition 20-04, In the Matter of the Petition to Repeal and Recreate Supreme Court Rule (SCR) Chapter 50, Regarding the Practical Training of Law Students**

Dear Honorable Justices:

We write to express Legal Action of Wisconsin's strong support of the Wisconsin Access to Justice Commission's petition to repeal and recreate SCR Chapter 50. We believe this rule change will advance the Commission's goals to expand learning opportunities for students, which would in turn encourage the development of a more diverse bar; this rule change would also increase access to justice for all low-income litigants.

Legal Action of Wisconsin is a Legal Service Corporation grantee committed to providing civil legal aid to low income Wisconsinites. We regularly host law students for externship placements, public interest fellowships, and pro bono opportunities. Legal Action staff attorneys and programs are well positioned to supervise and train law students to practice law. This rule change would allow us to provide law students with a comprehensive practical experience through which students can develop and hone necessary attorney skills. Advocating for clients in settlement negotiations and providing representation in court proceedings are critical skills they can employ throughout their career.

As one of the largest law firms in the state, we recognize the value of hiring new attorneys with practical experience. The proposed expanded practice rule would significantly increase the number of practical placements for law students in Wisconsin. We believe this will expand and diversify the law students working in Wisconsin and ultimately incentivizes them to remain as attorneys, to the betterment of the bar.

The proposed rule would increase access to justice and the courts for low-income litigants. For example, law students at Legal Action's Eviction Defense Project currently shadow volunteer attorneys as they represent low-income tenants facing eviction. Although observing attorneys work through a case is a valuable experience, this rule change would allow us to expand the student role to include negotiating with opposing parties, entering stipulations, filing and arguing motions in Small Claims Court, and representing clients in evidentiary hearings. Through students, we would be able to increase the number

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of clients who are represented, ensuring that more low-income litigants are represented in court proceedings that might affect their long-term economic stability.

Respectfully submitted,

Deedee Peterson  
Executive Director

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