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Wauwatosa, WI  
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February 5, 2021

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

(Submitted electronically)

Re: Petition 20-06, State Bar of Wisconsin  
Emeritus Membership

Honorable Justices of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin:

I write in support of Petition 20-06 seeking to amend the Supreme Court Rules to clarify the status, rights and obligations of Wisconsin lawyers who are at transitional or late stages of their participation in our profession. I am one of the petitioners, and as the Memorandum in Support of the petition observes, during my presidency of the Bar I acted to create the Emeritus Task Force from whose work the petition arises.

But in addition to my official interest in this matter, I also write as a Wisconsin lawyer who is himself at that transitional point of his professional life. While I have largely retired from the active practice of law, I maintain an of counsel relationship with my law firm, and I am occasionally called upon to counsel other lawyers both within and outside my firm. This is a situation that I enjoy, inasmuch as advising and advocating for lawyers regarding their ethical obligations and sometimes their entanglements was a principal focus of my practice for many years. That focus and my current experience are directly relevant to my support for the petition. Not least, my interest in continuing my practice in this way requires that I maintain my understanding of and competence in the law.

I will not needlessly reiterate the persuasive rationale put forth in the Memorandum in Support. The Emeritus Task Force was a who's who of some of the finest members of our profession, weighted appropriately towards lawyers who have personal experience with transition – and a sympathetic understanding of the issues affecting senior lawyers. I believe the work they did was exemplary, and in the finest tradition of our Bar.

Instead, I would tell you that all of us involved in this effort, from its first days, have understood that making any change to membership status and requirements for older and transitioning lawyers is inherently and rightly a very serious and, it should be said, a somewhat fraught matter. We would not have embarked on this project if we had not believed that these were important issues that needed the most thoughtful consideration before any changes were proposed. It has never been our interest or

desire to suggest changes that would needlessly cause consternation or complication for any Wisconsin lawyer, especially members of longstanding whose careers of service to their clients and to justice we instinctively honor.

I am confident that the petition before you has carefully balanced the personal interests of Wisconsin lawyers with our obligations as a profession to the public, to the Court and to each other. I believe it proposes a membership framework that is simpler, fairer and more sensible for all of us who come to this sometimes challenging but inevitable point in life and career.

Yours Very Truly

Francis W. Deisinger / S /  
State Bar # 1009509