

CHAMBERS OF CIRCUIT COURT

HONORABLE RODERICK A. CAMERON

Branch One-Chippewa County

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Chippewa Falls, WI 54729-1876

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KRISS ANDERSON
JUDICIAL ASSISTANT

ERIC W. OLSON
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January 31, 2014

Clerk of Supreme Court
Attention: Deputy Clerk – Rules
P.O. Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701-1688

Re: Petition 13-14 to Amend SCR 60.04

I support the above petition.

I have been a Circuit Judge in Chippewa County for almost 31 years, where I have handled almost every conceivable case type. Since I took the bench in April 1983 the Chippewa County caseload has increased such that the legislature created a third judicial branch for Chippewa County in 2008.

Although all case types are processed in Chippewa County, the majority of my cases are in family law and criminal law. In both areas, I now see large numbers of self-represented litigants. In family law, I estimate that 90 percent of cases have one or both litigants proceeding without an attorney. In criminal law, approximately 50 percent of defendants in court choose to proceed without an attorney. Almost all traffic and ordinance cases proceed with the defendant being self-represented, but the number of these cases is minimal compared to criminal and family.

My experience with self-represented litigants is that most lack the ability to adequately present their cases. I frequently ask neutral questions in an effort to determine what happened. Were I not to do so, there is a significant probability that the outcome of the case will not reflect what really happened.

The office of the Clerk of Circuit Court works with self-represented litigants many times each day as does my judicial assistant. They spend a large amount of time providing information to these litigants, and a significant amount of time explaining that they cannot provide legal advice.

This proposed amendment will enable me to provide better service to self-represented litigants, which in turn will improve the quality of the justice system. Overall, it will enable judges to work more efficiently with self-represented litigants.

I urge the court to approve this resolution.

Respectfully,

Roderick A. Cameron

c: Margaret J. Vergeront

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