

---

**From:** Giovanna Shay <GShay@ghla.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 3, 2021 9:34 AM  
**To:** Rules Committee; Del Ciampo, Joseph  
**Cc:** Shelley White; Nilda Havrilla; Moses Beckett; Rafie Podolsky  
**Subject:** Legal Services Comment In Support of CBA Ethics Committee Proposed Amendment to RPC 1.8-Modest Humanitarian Gifts to Indigent Clients  
**Attachments:** Legal\_Services\_Comment\_Supporting\_Proposed\_Change\_Rule\_1.8.pdf

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Dear Rules Committee staff and members,

Please find attached a comment by legal services organizations in support of the CBA Ethics Committee's proposed amendment to Rule 1.8 of the Connecticut Rules of Professional Conduct, permitting legal services and pro bono attorneys to provide modest gifts to indigent clients to meet basic human needs. This is on the Rules Committee agenda for its March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Giovanna Shay  
Litigation & Advocacy Director  
Greater Hartford Legal Aid  
999 Asylum Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl.  
Hartford, CT 06105-2465  
(860) 541-5061  
FAX: (860) 541-5050  
[gshay@ghla.org](mailto:gshay@ghla.org)

**Privileged and Confidential. If received in error, please notify me by email and delete the message.**

*GHLA's attorneys and staff are working but our physical office space is not open to the public. We are responding to email and voice mail. We are not accepting walk-in appointments, so please do not come to the office. To reach us, please call 860-541-5000, or contact your GHLA attorney or staff contact directly.*

*Los abogados y empleados de GHLA están trabajando pero nuestras oficinas físicas no están abiertas al público. Estamos respondiendo a correo electrónico y mensajes de voz. No estamos aceptando citas en persona, así que por favor no visite la oficina. Para comunicarse con nosotros, favor de llamar al 860-541-5000, o comuníquese con su abogado o empleado de GHLA directamente.*



Greater Hartford Legal Aid



NEW HAVEN  
LEGAL  
ASSISTANCE  
ASSOCIATION, INC.



**Connecticut  
Legal Services**

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

March 3, 2021

Chair: Hon. Andrew J. McDonald  
Rules Committee of the Superior Court  
Connecticut Supreme Court  
231 Capitol Ave.  
Hartford, CT 06106  
RulesCommittee@jud.ct.gov  
Joseph.DelCiampo@jud.ct.gov

RE: Proposal to Amend Rule 1.8(e) of the Connecticut Rules of Professional Conduct to permit, in limited circumstances, a humanitarian exception to the prohibition on providing financial assistance to a client

Dear Justice McDonald and Honorable Members of the Rules Committee:

This letter is submitted by legal services organizations Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Connecticut Legal Services, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, and Statewide Legal Services in support of the Connecticut Bar Association proposal to Amend Rule 1.8 (e) of the Connecticut Rules of Professional Conduct to permit, in limited circumstances, a humanitarian exception to the prohibition on providing financial assistance to a client. The proposed rule change would provide assurance to legal services and pro bono attorneys that we can provide occasional modest financial assistance to indigent clients without running afoul of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

The current version of Rule 1.8(e)(2), of course, permits attorneys to pay “court costs and expenses of litigation” for indigent clients. However, legal services and pro bono attorneys sometimes face difficult situations in which they would like to provide assistance to indigent clients that is not clearly for court costs and litigation expenses. Attorneys might want to buy food for clients after a long day at court, for example, or give clients bus fare, so that they can run critical errands.

Currently, supervising attorneys find ourselves explaining to our colleagues and volunteers that the Rules of Professional Conduct bar us from providing such assistance if it is not clearly a court cost or litigation expense. This proposed change to Rule 1.8(e) will permit attorneys serving the poor to respond to clients' basic human needs without fear of committing an ethics violation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

***/s/Giovanna Shay***

Litigation & Advocacy Director  
Greater Hartford Legal Aid  
999 Asylum Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl.  
Hartford, CT 06105-2465  
[gshay@ghla.org](mailto:gshay@ghla.org)  
860-541-5061

Shelley White  
Litigation & Advocacy Director  
New Haven Legal Assistance  
205 Orange Street  
New Haven, CT 06510  
[swhite@nhlegal.org](mailto:swhite@nhlegal.org)  
203-946-4811

Nilda Havrilla  
Litigation & Advocacy Director  
Connecticut Legal Services  
16 Main St., 2d Fl.  
New Britain, CT 06051  
[nhavrilla@ctlegal.org](mailto:nhavrilla@ctlegal.org)  
860-357-9311

Moses Beckett  
Managing Attorney, Housing Unit  
Statewide Legal Services  
1290 Silas Deane Hwy.  
Wethersfield, CT 06109  
860-344-0380  
[mbeckett@slsct.org](mailto:mbeckett@slsct.org)