



RC ID # 2021-004 d

*Division of Public Defender Services
State of Connecticut*

Attorney Christine Perra Rapillo
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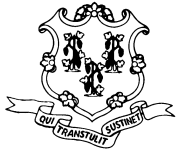
Attorney Joseph Del Ciampo
Counsel
Superior Court Rules Committee
100 Washington Street, 3rd Floor
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Attorney Del Ciampo:

I am writing in support of the proposed amendment to **Rule 1.8 of the Rules of Professional Conduct, Conflict of Interest, Prohibited Transactions.** The Office of Chief Public Defender wholeheartedly supports this proposal.

This amendment would allow our offices to provide basic humanitarian assistance to our clients. Our attorneys and staff are often faced with clients who are released from custody with no way to obtain transportation home. Women being released from prison regularly arrive at our city courts without coats during the cold winter months. Mentally ill clients come to court having not eaten. A client may lack sufficient means to pay for a ride to a critical expert evaluation, needed for the defense of their case.

Under the current version of Rule 1.8, which prohibits financial assistance to clients, our defense teams are ethically prohibited from provided even basic assistance to these individuals. This amendment specifies that counsel for an indigent litigant may provide modest gifts to help with food, transportation, medicine, shelter and other basic expenses.



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The Division of Public Defender Services represents the most vulnerable individuals who appear before our courts. This includes indigent accused children and adults in criminal cases; children and indigent adults in child welfare cases; indigent contemnors and respondents in paternity matters in family magistrate court; and children from indigent families who need representation or Guardian ad litem services in Family Court. It is appropriate to allow for counsel representing indigent, vulnerable people to provide basic assistance. This assistance will keep them safe and allow them to assist in the preparation of their legal case. Allowing lawyers to provide such assistance for indigent litigants will bolster the community's faith in our legal system, particularly for our clients who are generally not willingly before the court. They would benefit from seeing their court appointed counsel as a partner in the solution to their problems.

I urge the Rules Committee to give careful consideration and support to these proposals.

Very truly yours,

Christine Perra Rapillo
Chief Public Defender