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SUPREME COURT COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE COURTS

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TO: Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.,
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FROM: Karen M. Cassidy, A.J.S.C.
Chair, Supreme Court Committee on Women in the Courts

Nancy L. Ridgway, J.S.C.
Vice Chair, Supreme Court Committee on Women in the Courts

DATE: Oct. 6, 2020

RE: Proposed change to Court Rule 1:42

We submit this letter on behalf of the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee on Women in the Courts. This correspondence serves as comment on the proposal to increase the total credit hours required for professionalism and ethics from 4 to 5, and to require that at least 2 credit hours of those 5 include the completion of qualifying coursework on diversity, inclusion, and elimination of bias. (Court Rule 1:42 Continuing Legal Education and CLE regulations to require credits in diversity, inclusion, and elimination of bias).

Our Committee initiated a proposal for a 1-credit requirement several years ago and prepared a submission which eventually made its way to the Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Committee. Once we learned of their interest, our committee joined forces with the Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns (now known as Committee on Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement) to present this proposal to the CLE committee on Jan. 25, 2017. That proposal sought to require 1 diversity and inclusion credit as part of the 4 credits of ethics and professionalism in a 2-year cycle. The committee felt – and continues to feel – modification of the rule best advances the goal of diversity and inclusion by ensuring that all attorneys receive key training focused on the elimination of bias.

Therefore, we would like to express our support of the proposal and encourage its adoption.