

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

ORDER

Acting in accordance with Article V, Sections 1 and 5 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, and the inherent power of this Court, and considering the need to amend Canon 3 of the Louisiana Code of Judicial Conduct,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED THAT:

Canon 3A(4) of the Louisiana Code of Judicial Conduct be and is hereby amended to read as follows:

CANON 3

A Judge Shall Perform the Duties  
of Office Impartially and Diligently

The judicial duties of a judge take precedence over all other activities. Judicial duties include all the duties of office prescribed by law. In the performance of these duties, the following standards apply:

A. Adjudicative Responsibilities.

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(4) A judge shall perform judicial duties without bias or prejudice. A judge shall not, in the performance of judicial duties, by words or conduct manifest bias or prejudice, and shall not permit staff, court officials or others subject to the judge's direction and control to do so. A judge may make reasonable efforts, consistent with the law and court rules, to facilitate the abilities of all litigants, including self-represented

litigants, to be fairly heard, provided, however, that in so doing, a judge should not give self-represented litigants an unfair advantage or create an appearance of partiality to the reasonable person.

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### **Commentary to Canon 3A(4) (2013)**

Steps judges may consider in facilitating the right of self-represented litigants to be heard, and which (they might find) are consistent with these principles include, but are not limited to:

- (1) making referrals to any resources available to assist the litigant in preparation of the case;
- (2) providing brief information about the proceeding and evidentiary and foundational requirements;
- (3) asking neutral questions to elicit or clarify information;
- (4) attempting to make legal concepts understandable by minimizing use of legal jargon; and
- (5) explaining the basis for a ruling.

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This rule change shall become effective upon signing, and shall remain in full force and effect thereafter, until amended or changed through future Orders of this Court.

New Orleans, Louisiana, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of March, 2013.

FOR THE COURT:

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Bernette Joshua Johnson, Chief Justice