



Via Email
July 27, 2016

Myles V. Lynk, Chair
ABA Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility

Re: Resolution 109 to Amend Model Rule of Professional Conduct 8.4 To Prohibit
Discrimination or Harassment in Conduct Related to the Practice of Law

Dear Mr. Lynk,

On behalf of the South Asian Bar Association of North America (SABA) and its 26 Chapters, we write in support of Resolution 109 to amend Model Rule of Professional Conduct 8.4 to expressly prohibit discrimination or harassment by a lawyer in the practice of law. This amendment seeks to codify language that only exists in a Comment to this Rule, which will bring the legal professions' model rules in line with the exacting standards of our profession. The encouragement of fair and equal treatment articulated by the proposed amendment, stands as one of the principal goals of SABA.

Formed in the aftermath of 9/11, SABA serves to promote the interests of South Asian lawyers and the South Asian community across North America. As a bar association, SABA affords South Asian lawyers across the continent a recognized forum for professional growth and advancement. Our rapidly growing membership is found at the pinnacle of the profession, including law firm partners, general counsels, amongst the highest ranks of the federal judiciary and department of justice and leading public interest practitioners and academics. Through this success, South Asian legal professionals have left an indelible mark on the legal profession.

Yet, despite these tremendous accomplishments, our members still suffer from both overt and implicit bias, unequal compensation and lack of access to decision making. In supporting the advancement and promotion of South Asian legal professionals and the protection of the greater South Asian legal community, SABA remains steadfast in supporting greater diversity and inclusion amongst our professions.

In focusing the Rule more precisely on the elimination of harassment and discrimination in the legal profession, the proposed amendment aligns with SABA's mission and recognizes the stark realities that our members, along with the members of our national partners, still combat. This institution's own statistics demonstrate that the law remains one of the least diverse professions. No rule in and of itself can eliminate the deep rooted discrimination and harassment embedded in our profession, however, the Model Rule, thoughtfully articulated by the ABA Standing Committee on Professional Responsibility enacts the standard for our profession to achieve.

Very truly yours,

SABA North America

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SABA Colorado
SABA D.C.
SABA Florida
SABA Georgia
SABA Greater Boston
SABA Metro St. Louis
SABA Michigan
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