

Canon 4
Extra-judicial Activities (Pro Bono Services and Activities)
ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service
Debbie Segal, Chair
February 3, 2004

In written testimony, the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service (“Pro Bono Committee”) urges the Commission to revise the Model Code of Judicial Conduct to make it more proactive in empowering and authorizing judges to assume the duty of promoting pro bono services while upholding their ethical responsibilities.

Through its testimony, the Pro Bono Committee seeks to dispel the common misperception that judges are prohibited by the Model Code of Judicial Conduct from supporting and encouraging pro bono activities. Judges have not only duty to ensure that justice is available for all citizens, without regard to their economic or social status, but also a specific duty to dedicate themselves to the improvement of the law and to the fair administration of justice. The Pro Bono Committee believes that encouragement of pro bono service falls squarely within a judge’s duties.

The Pro Bono Committee brings to the Commission’s attention creative and innovative approaches used by judges to foster delivery of pro bono services.

The Pro Bono Committee offers to the Commission its suggested textual changes to Canon 4 and its commentary, at the Commissions request. [Not included with the written testimony.]