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6th Circuit – District Division - Concord
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Henrietta Luneau
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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

May 7, 2024

N.H. Supreme Court
Advisory Committee on Rules
1 Charles Doe Drive
Concord, NH 03301
rulescomment@courts.state.nh.us

RE: Docket Number 2024-01

Dear Justice Donovan and Members of the Advisory Committee on Rules:

I write in response to your invitation for public comment on Docket Number 2024-01, a proposed amendment to Supreme Court Rule 54(4). I oppose the proposed amendment to Rule 54(4) as it would hamper innovation to improve court services and access to justice, undermine efforts to ensure consistency between court locations, and deprive the trial courts of an important tool to achieve their mission to provide accessible, prompt, and efficient forums for the fair and independent administration of justice. I urge the Committee to recommend against adoption of the proposed rule.

I. Background

I am a current New Hampshire Circuit Court judge and I presently preside over the Circuit Court's centralized Involuntary Emergency Admission (IEA) docket. I also handle a variety of other cases in all three divisions of the Circuit Court. As a sitting judge, I rely on a number of Administrative Orders to guide my work and ensure consistency with other judges. Prior to my appointment to the bench, I had the privilege of serving in the Circuit Court Administrative Office as a Staff Attorney, Supervisory Staff Attorney, and Court Administrator. While at the Administrative Office, I was involved in various aspects of the Court's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented changes it brought to the court system, as well as with initiatives such as the Eviction Diversion and Landlord-Tenant Mediation projects, the centralization of IEA cases, and the Family Treatment Court. I was involved in the research and drafting of a number of administrative orders. Based on my experience, I am able to provide background on the various uses of administrative orders in the Circuit Court. I note, however, that the views expressed in this letter are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Circuit Court Administrative Office or any member of the administrative team.

Supreme Court Rule 54(4) defines the role of the administrative judges. Specifically, they are tasked with:

> …general supervisory responsibility for the administration, operation and improvement of the court in order to provide for the expeditious disposition of all cases over which the court has jurisdiction, subject to the policies, rules, orders and guidelines established by the supreme court.

Sup. Ct. R. 54(4). In order to fulfill those responsibilities, the administrative judges are empowered to issue "administrative orders as may be required from time to time to carry out the responsibilities of the office," Sup. Ct. R. 54(4)(c), to implement "established policies, orders and regulations concerning the court's internal management and operation," Sup. Ct. R. 54(4)(g) and to supervise "caseflow management." Sup. Ct. R. 54(4)(h). RSA chapter 490-F provides additional responsibilities and authorities to the administrative judge of the Circuit Court.

In my experience, the administrative judges have utilized administrative orders to fulfil their responsibilities in eight primary ways:

1. Appointment of presiding judges, assignment of judges to particularly locations, and other judicial scheduling matters. See Sup. Ct. R. 54(4)(i).

2. Appointment of referees, see RSA 490-F:15, and bail commissioners. See RSA 597:15-a.

3. Transfer of cases between court locations. See RSA 490-F:2.

4. Establishing specialized or centralized dockets for certain case types. See, e.g., Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2024-01 (family division complex case docket); Cir. Ct. O. 2022-12 (centralized IEA docket); Cir. Ct. O. 2014-04 (trust docket).

5. Establishing comprehensive protocols governing certain case types. See, e.g., Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2023-13 (adopting 2023 Protocols Relative to Abuse and Neglect Cases and Permanency Planning and making them mandatory); Dist. Ct. Admin O. 2007-67, Fam. Div. Admin. O. 2007-06 (adopting Domestic Violence Protocols and making them mandatory); Cir. Ct. Admin. 2021-07 (permitting electronic submission of domestic violence and stalking petitions by plaintiffs working with domestic violence crisis or family justice centers)

6. Establishing procedures for specialized projects and programs. See, e.g., Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2021-18 (establishing the eviction diversion and landlord-tenant mediation programs); Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2021-17 (establishing the family treatment court pilot project).

7. Providing uniform guidelines and procedures for various court functions. See,

e.g., Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2023-10 (updating standards for assessment and approval of professional guardian fees, including rate which professional guardians may bill without prior court approval); Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2021-15 (establishing procedure for complying with federal law in landlord and tenant cases); Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2021-06 (governing the use of email to submit documents in non-e-filing cases); Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2020-02 (scheduling of animal cruelty cases); Joint Admin. O. 2018-01 (governing the use of video testimony by forensic examiners).

8. Responding to emergencies and other exigent circumstances. See, e.g., Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2020-7 (authorizing temporary expedited guardianship cases in response to COVID-19); Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2021-06 (establishing procedures for compliance with temporary order by CDC halting certain evictions).

While the first three categories of administrative orders are unlikely to be affected by the proposed rule, the remainder are likely to be impacted by the proposed changes, as the latter five types of order arguably "supplement[], modify[], or augment[]" one or more existing court rules. Thus, I will give a few examples of how administrative orders of the latter five types have been crucial to fulfilling the trial courts' mission.

To begin with, I was deeply involved in the process of creating the centralized IEA docket over which I now preside. The creation of the docket began with a crisis. The Supreme Court ruled that individuals subject to IEAs were entitled to a hearing within three days of being detained at a local hospital, rather than within three days after reaching a designated receiving facility (DRF) (one of the state's specialized mental health hospitals). See Doe v. Comm'r of New Hampshire Dep't of Health & Hum. Servs., 174 N.H. 239, 252–53 (2021). Prior to that ruling, IEA petitions were not even filed with the court until after patients reached a DRF and were only heard on certain days of the week by the courts with jurisdiction over a DRF location. Most court locations had no capacity to handle IEA hearings. The Circuit Court quickly determined that the only way to provide timely hearings to individuals held at all of the twenty-eight acute care hospitals, seven DRFs, and ten county jails was to establish a centralized IEA docket that could provide for daily hearings around the state, supported by a dedicated team of staff members who could docket cases, prepare hearing notices, and issue decisions within the exceedingly tight time limits proscribed by law. Working with stakeholders from across state agencies, private hospitals, and the mental health community, the Court was able to stand up a centralized docket within a matter of weeks, going from a situation where more than fifty percent of IEAs were being dismissed on timeliness grounds to one where the Court has held thousands of hearings over the past two years and dismissed less than two dozen cases on timeliness grounds.

Administrative orders were critical to the establishment of the central IEA docket. They allowed the Court to set parameters for where and how petitions would be filed and allowed the Court to quickly modify those parameters as new resources became available and full centralization came online. See Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2022-05; Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2022-12. The Court also retains the flexibility to modify the program going

forward, as other stakeholders work to improve aspects of the IEA process outside of the Court's control, such as the availability of DRF beds. Had the Court been required to go through the rules process to create or modify the program, it would not have been able to nimbly respond to the IEA crisis and ensure that thousands of individuals experiencing a mental health crisis received a timely hearing.

Other orders I was involved in developing operate on a smaller scale but were still critical to providing access to justice. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying indigent defense crisis, the Circuit Court dramatically increased the use of video and telephonic hearings in criminal cases. Doing so allowed the Circuit Court to continue processing cases without jeopardizing public health and increased the number of attorneys willing to take indigent defense cases in court locations far from their offices, because attorneys were able to consult with their clients remotely and often resolve cases without ever having to drive to a remote courthouse.

In Superior Court, which had an established electronic filing system and rules governing proxy signatures, this shift did not create major problems in terms of document submission. In the Circuit Court, however, there were not electronic filing rules applicable to criminal cases. Under Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(a), a defendant is required to sign an Acknowledgment of Rights form in order to enter a guilty plea. Some courts interpreted this requirement as requiring an original ink signature by the defendant, while others allowed for the electronic or proxy signatures that are permitted by the Superior Court rules. The indigent defense bar requested that the Administrative Office step in to provide uniformity, as the requirement for ink signatures in some locations was a challenge for attorneys who were otherwise participating in a case entirely remotely and was discouraging attorneys from accepting cases.

Within a few weeks of the defense bar's request, we completed extensive legal research on the validity of proxy signatures and determined that, with appropriate safeguards, there was no legal obstacle to the use of proxy signatures on the Waiver and other forms. The Administrative Judge issued an order establishing uniform, statewide criteria for the acceptance of proxy signatures in criminal cases. See Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2021-19. This order allowed the Circuit Court to respond quickly to an issue that was interfering with access to justice, but that may not have been substantial enough to warrant separate rulemaking, at least not outside the context of the implementation of electronic filing in Circuit Court criminal cases. It also fulfilled the Administrative Judge's duty to provide for the expeditious disposition of cases and to manage case flow by ensuring uniform policies throughout the state, consistent with the legislature's intent to create a single, statewide court. See RSA 490-F:2.

A final example of the utility and importance of administrative orders are the Protocols Relative to Abuse and Neglect Cases which govern the day-to-day processing of those case types by both judges and staff in the Circuit Court. The Protocols have been adopted and made mandatory by administrative orders. See Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2023-13 (adopting most recent version of Protocols). The Protocols are developed by a multidisciplinary team and take into account a vast body of applicable law, including

New Hampshire statues and case law as well as highly complicated Federal laws and supporting regulations, adherence to which is required to receive federal funding to support vulnerable children and their families. They are frequently updated and amended to reflect changes in the applicable law and make improvements to the handling of these critical cases. The Protocols run to three hundred pages in length and include extensive annotations and explanatory material that simply would not be suitable for inclusion in a set of court rules. As a judge, I turn to the Protocols virtually any time I am called on to hear an Abuse and Neglect case to ensure that my orders comply with the interlocking web of Federal and State requirements, and I know that court staff and the attorneys involved in these cases rely on the Protocols on a daily basis. Requiring such Protocols to go through the rules process each time a change is necessary would be incredibly cumbersome and likely result in the Protocols becoming so outdated as to lose their utility or, in some cases, to mandate actions inconsistent with applicable State or Federal law.

These three examples are just a few of the myriad ways the current version of Rule 54(4) has facilitated the fair, efficient, and uniform operation of the trial courts. My experience as a judge and in the Circuit Court Administrative Office with administrative orders informs my opposition to the proposed rule for reasons detailed below.

I. The Proposed Rule is Poorly Drafted and Would Cause Immediate Upheaval

First and foremost, the proposed rule is poorly drafted, and its implementation would cause immediate disruption to the operation of the trial courts. Starting with the drafting, the proposed rule change applies to any administrative order which “supplements, modifies, or augments existing court rules.” This language is wildly overbroad. The plain meaning of the words “supplement” and “augment” – essentially, to add to or fill in deficiencies of[1] - is so expansive as to encompass virtually any administrative order that does not deal with a specific case or judicial officer. At a minimum, the language of the proposed rule would invite endless litigation about whether any particular administrative order “supplements” or “augments” a rule.

An example of the breadth, and negative impact, of the proposed rules comes from the world of guardianship. Probate Division Rule 88 provides that the fees of fiduciaries are subject to approval by the court and must be “reasonable.” Circuit Court Administrative Order 2023-10, which provides standards for the assessment of professional guardian fees, does not change that basic requirement, or eliminate judicial discretion to determine reasonable fees in a particular case. However, based on long judicial experience, applicable national standards, and consultation with stakeholders, the Order supplements the Rule’s requirement of reasonableness by providing detailed criteria for assessing reasonableness that assist judges and litigants and provide

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[1] Supplement, Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/supplement (last visited Apr. 30, 2024) (“to fill up or supply by additions**:** add something to**:** fill the deficiencies of”); Augment, Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/augment. (last visited Apr. 30, 2024) (“to enlarge or increase especially in size, amount, or degree: make bigger”).

predictability and uniformity statewide. Providing uniform guidelines statewide for fees helps to guard vulnerable individuals against excessive fees while ensuring stable and predictable compensation for professional guardians, incentivizing individuals to take on this critical role for wards.

The proposed rule would require the Rules Committee to expend considerable time and resources to research and evaluate this complicated area of law and then, if it elected to adopt guidelines, would etch those guidelines in stone, requiring another full rulemaking process if changes were needed. In all likelihood, the requirement for full rulemaking in order to create guidelines similar to Administrative Order 2023-10 would result in far fewer guidelines being implemented and, consequently, less uniformity in practice statewide. The end result would be less accessible, prompt, and efficient administration of justice. Moreover, given the broad sweep of the proposed rule, it will invite substantial litigation and confusion as to which existing administrative orders would be immediately voided if the rule were adopted.

In addition to its substantial overbreadth, the proposed rule is vague and unclear as to how it will operate. The proposal provides that administrative orders subject to its terms "shall be issued only on an emergency temporary basis while the proposed rule or amendment is subject to the Rule-Making Procedures in Supreme Court Rule 51." This language raises a number of questions. For example, the rule does not define what constitutes an "emergency temporary basis." That language could be read to impose a time limit on administrative orders, though the proposed rule does not clearly provide for one nor does the proponent suggest any corresponding changes to Rule 51, which presently has no time limits on action by the Rules Committee or the Supreme Court. The proposed language also implies that only administrative orders responding to an "emergency" can be issued prior to the rulemaking process, raising the question, and inviting litigation, about what constitutes an "emergency." Would a Supreme Court case interpreting the domestic violence statutes be considered an "emergency," so as to warrant updates to the Domestic Violence Protocols to reflect current law? Would the availability of a time-limited grant to pilot a new mediation project or therapeutic court constitute an "emergency?" The proposed rule provides no clear answer.

Additionally, while the proposed rule provides that an administrative order may only go into effect while the "proposed rule or amendment" is subject to rulemaking, it provides no guidance on how administrative orders will be translated into rules. Would any administrative order that someone – who would make the determination is unclear in the proposal – deems to "supplement" or "augment" a rule automatically go to the Rules Committee or would the trial courts be required to submit separate rules change suggestions per Rule 51(4)? Again, the proposed rule offers no guidance and there are no companion changes proposed to Rule 51. The lack of clear procedure invites uncertainty and litigation and is not conducive to the orderly administration of justice.

The proposed rule is also silent on the status of an administrative order subject to the rule if the Supreme Court does not take "Final Action" as defined by Rule 51(7). The proposed rule provides that administrative orders shall remain in effect until "Final

Action" on a companion rules proposal. Rule 51(7) defines "Final Action" to include "adopt[ing], amend[ing], or reject[ing]" a rule or taking "such other action as the Court deems appropriate." However, in my review of recent rulemaking, including docket R-2022-0003, which id cited by the proponent, it appears the Court often takes no explicit "Final Action" on many rules proposals. In the case of R-2022-003, the Court invited public comment on the proposal, see Sup. Ct. O. R-2022-0003, In re August 1, 2022 Report of the Advisory Committee on Rules (Sept. 2, 2024), and then issued no further orders on the proposed rule. It is unclear whether the Court's silence would constitute "Final Action" pursuant to Rule 51(7) and, by extension, what effect the Court's silence would have on administrative orders subject to the proposed rule.

Finally, the proposed rule would cause immediate upheaval in the operation of the trial courts by voiding long established administrative orders and would invite potentially endless litigation about the validity of others. The proposed rule provides that, upon its adoption, "All current administrative orders which supplement, modify, or augment existing court rules shall be void." Given the breadth of the rule, as discussed above, this language would result in the immediate invalidation of administrative orders that are crucial to the day-to-day operations of the trial courts, or at least throw such orders into serious question, necessitating time consuming litigation to determine their validity. Among the orders that would be invalidated or questioned are the standing orders governing child support, see Fam. Div. Admin. O. 2005-02, and the Domestic Violence and Abuse and Neglect Protocols, see Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2023-13; Dist. Ct. Admin O. 2007-67, Fam. Div. Admin. O. 2007-06. The mass invalidation of dozens of orders that provide for the orderly operation of the trial courts, many of which have been in effect for years or even decades, will almost certainly cause chaos in the trial courts and require inordinate amounts of time to be dedicated towards litigating which orders are still valid. This is to say nothing of the dramatic increase in the Rules Committee's workload that would invariably result from the mass submission of many of the newly invalidated orders to the Committee for consideration. The disruption occasioned by the proposed rule is likely to be substantial and will interfere with the fair and efficient administration of justice in the trial courts.

II. The Proposed Rule Would Hamper Innovation in the Trial Courts

The system created by the proposed rule would hamper the ability of the trial courts to implement innovative new programs to improve access to, and the quality of, justice in the trial courts. One key way in which administrative orders have been used is to create specialized or pilot projects at one or more trial court locations. For example, administrative orders were utilized to create both the Family Treatment Court Pilot Program, see Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2021-17, and the Eviction Diversion and Landlord-Tenant Mediation programs. See Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2021-18. Administrative orders are an ideal vehicle for launching innovative projects such as these for several reasons. First, administrative orders can be implemented, and amended, quickly, allowing the trial courts to respond to emerging opportunities, such as time-limited grants, and to fine tune programs as the courts learn what does and does not work for litigants. Second, administrative orders allow the trial courts to describe the operation of programs in a

level of detail that simply would not be feasible in a set of generally applicable court rules. Third, administrative orders allow the trial courts to create procedures for projects that operate only in certain court locations, without the need to write for multiple sets of court rules, applicable dependent upon the location in which a case is heard.

The proposed rule would hamper the trial courts' ability to innovate and find new ways to improve the quality of services offered the public. As discussed above, the scope of the proposed rule is so broad that it would almost certainly apply to administrative orders regarding the operation of new projects or programs. Thus, to implement a new project, the trial courts would be required to either issue a "temporary emergency order" (if a new project could be deemed an "emergency") or seek to engage in the full rulemaking process. This burdensome process would likely discourage the trial courts from attempting new projects, particularly those involving funding opportunities available only for a short time, and delay implementation of other projects while rulemaking is in progress. Once rulemaking for the new project was completed, the procedures for the project would be set in stone, only modifiable through further rulemaking, thus hindering the ability of the trial courts to fine tune programs or respond to changes in funding requirements. The same process would apply if a court sought to end a program, either because it was not successful or because the conditions surrounding the project changed, potentially requiring the continuation of projects that are ineffective or no longer funded. Additionally, by requiring such administrative orders to go through rulemaking, the proposed rule would either result in a rulebook bloated by detailed guidelines for programs that might only exist in a few court locations or result in less detailed and comprehensive guidelines, thus making programs less efficient and more difficult to manage. Alternatively, it is possible that the proposed rule will lead to a proliferation of rules authorizing the trial courts to operate certain program and then providing that the exact parameters of the program would be determined by the courts themselves, which is simply a more cumbersome way of achieving the exact same situation that exists presently. See, e.g., Sup. Ct. R. 48-B(5)(a) (providing that indigency for purpose of mediation funding shall be defined by Circuit Court administrative order).

III. The Proposed Rule Would Undermine Efforts to Provide Consistency and Predictability for Litigants

It is the mission of the Judicial Branch to "provide accessible, prompt, and efficient forums for the fair and independent administration of justice." In a unified court system such as New Hampshire's, one way to achieve that goal is to ensure uniformity and predictability of policies and procedures across court locations. Doing so permits the court system to achieve processing efficiencies by centralizing certain court functions or permitting staff to take certain action without waiting for judicial review, in turn allowing the court to more quickly resolve disputes and provide timely hearings. Uniform policies and procedures also ensure that similarly situated litigants receive similar treatment, regardless of where in the state their case is heard. This enhances fairness and helps to resolve or avoid disputes altogether, as litigants can expect that certain issues will always be handled the same way, regardless of which judge or court hears the case.

Administrative orders have long been utilized to provide for uniform practices in the trial courts. Such orders, which inherently “supplement” or “augment” existing rules, provide uniformity on issues ranging from establishing presumptions for which cases should be conducted via video conference, see Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2021-05, to granting clerks limited authority to vacate bench warrants under defined circumstances, see Cir. Ct. Admin. O. 2015-13, to establishing uniform standards for child support orders. See Fam. Div. Admin. O. 2005-02. Administrative orders are well-suited for this purpose. They provide a level of detail that would be unwieldy in the context of court rules and unrealistic to expect from the formal rulemaking process. They provide court-wide consistency while also allowing flexibility to respond quickly to changing circumstances, including modifying procedures or standards that have not been as effective as anticipated. Such orders are also squarely within the scope of the administrative judges’ responsibilities for general supervision of the trial courts and efficient management of case processing, particularly given that most such orders guide the actions of judges and court staff, rather than imposing requirements directly on litigants.

The proposed rule would terminate all existing administrative orders that provide for uniform practices. It would also make it far more difficult to implement uniform practices in the future by requiring formal rulemaking to implement essentially all court wide procedures. As noted above, if the proposed rule is interpreted to require an “emergency” before an administrative order could be issued, there would be lengthy delays in implementing uniform procedures as non-emergent administrative orders would not be permitted on an interim basis. Rulemaking would also be required to make even the most quotidian changes to such practices, depriving the trial courts of the ability to easily adapt procedures to changing circumstances and potentially requiring courts to abide by rules that are outdated or do not effectively serve their intended purpose. Ultimately, the result of the proposed rule is likely to be fewer uniform procedures and more inconsistency statewide. This result is contrary to the Judicial Branch’s mission and would reduce the quality of services provided to the citizens who depend on the court system.

IV. The Proposed Rule is Unnecessary to Address the Proponents’ Stated Concerns

Finally, the proposed rule is simply unnecessary to address the proponents' stated concerns. Initially, the proponent argued that the rule was necessary to prevent the use of administrative orders to change court rules. See Letter from Steven Endres, Jan. 29, 2024, 2. He complained that such changes could be implemented “without being subject to any type of appeal.” Id. This claim is simply without merit. There is a tried-and-true procedure for any litigant who is aggrieved by an administrative order (or a rule for that matter) which he or she believes contradicts governing law or is otherwise unconstitutional or illegal: file a motion in a particular case challenging its validity and, if the trial court does not agree, take an appeal to the Supreme Court. See In re WMUR Channel 9, 148 N.H. 644, 648 (2002) (overturning decision based on administrative policy which violated court rule); see also In re Maynard, 155 N.H. 630, 634–35 (2007) (addressing challenge to court rule alleged to be inconsistent with statute). Indeed, the

Supreme Court has long held that "[a]n administrative order…is ineffective to amend a properly promulgated rule" and has overturned decisions based on administrative rules which purported to modify court rules. See Cotter v. Wright, 145 N.H. 568, 570 (2000). The proponent provides no evidence to suggest that traditional litigation is inadequate to respond to any isolated instance where an administrative order allegedly contradicts or modifies a court rule such that a dramatic overhaul of the current system, with all of the negative consequences outlined above, is necessary. Indeed, there is no indication that the proponents of the rule have ever attempted to address their concerns with particular administrative orders through traditional litigation. Absent any indication that ordinary court processes are inadequate to remedy the alleged injury the proponents seek to redress, there is simply no need to modify the current rule.

Moreover, the other rationales offered by the proponent can easily be addressed by less radical changes, and with far fewer negative effects, than the proposed rule. To the extent accessibility and awareness of administrative orders is a problem, this issue could be remedied quite easily by changes on the Judicial Branch's website, such as better indexing orders for searching, and by broader publication of orders, at least to the extent they are not case or judicial officer specific, in Bar publications and in the "Latest News" section of the Branch's website. If feasible, such orders could be submitted to legal databases for inclusion in their services. Addressing the proponents concerns about outdated or obsolete orders could easily be accomplished administratively through a review of all current orders and their division into "Active" and "Obsolete" orders, and perhaps a separate category for non-generally applicable orders, such as referee appointments and the like. To the extent such a review need be formalized, a simple change to Rule 54(4)(c) would suffice:

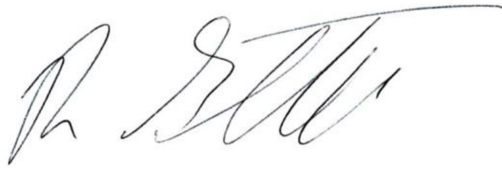
> (c) Issuing superior court or circuit court administrative orders as may be required from time to time to carry out the responsibilities of the office**[, provided that the administrative judge or designee shall review all active administrative orders on an annual basis to determine if any order should be amended or rescinded]**;

Given that the proponents' concerns can be addressed without dramatic changes to current practice, and all of the negative consequences that such a change would entail, the Rules Committee should recommend against adoption of the proposed rule.

V. Conclusion

I am grateful for the opportunity to provide input to the Rules Committee as it considers the proposed change to Rule 54(4). I strongly urge the Committee to recommend against adoption of the proposed rule and I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have about my comments.

Sincerely,



Ryan C. Guptill
Judge, New Hampshire Circuit Court