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**IN THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF ARIZONA**

In the Matter of:

PETITION TO AMEND ER 8.4,
RULE 42,
ARIZONA RULES OF THE SUPREME
COURT

Supreme Court No. R-

**COMMENT OF FIRST AMENDMENT
LAWYERS ASSOCIATION IN
OPPOSITION TO PETITION TO
AMEND ER 8.4, RULE 42**

This comment is filed pursuant to this Court's Order of January 18, 2018, soliciting public comment on Petition R-17-0032. In its petition, the National Lawyers Guild, Central Arizona Chapter (the "Lawyers Guild"), urges this Court to amend Rule 42, ER 8.4, by adopting ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) ("Rule 8.4(g)"). Rule 8.4(g) is a

1 flawed rule that is offensive to the First Amendment rights of
2 attorneys, and this Court should refuse to adopt it.

3 The First Amendment Lawyers Association (“FALA”) is a national,
4 non-profit organization of approximately 200 members who
5 represent the vanguard of First Amendment lawyers. Its central
6 mission is to protect and defend the First Amendment from attack by
7 both private and public incursion. Since its founding in the late
8 1960s, FALA’s membership has been involved in several cases at the
9 forefront of defining the First Amendment’s protections. FALA has a
10 marked interest in opposing the adoption of Rule 8.4(g), as the
11 proposed rule is unconstitutionally vague and violates the First
12 Amendment, and would lead to the suppression of protected
13 speech that is only tangentially related to the practice of law.

14 **1.0 Contents of Rule 8.4(g)**

15 The American Bar Association (“ABA”) adopted Rule 8.4(g) in
16 August of 2016. The Lawyers Guild’s Petition to adopt Rule 8.4(g)
17 would add a subsection (h) to Arizona Rule of Professional Conduct
18 8.4, which would provide that it is professional misconduct for a
19 lawyer to:

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1 (g) engage in conduct that the lawyer knows or
 2 reasonably should know is harassment or discrimination on
 3 the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, ethnicity,
 4 disability, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity,
 5 marital status, or socioeconomic status in conduct related
 6 to the practice of law. This paragraph does not limit the
 7 ability of a lawyer to accept, decline, or withdraw from a
 8 representation in accordance with Rule 1.16. This
 9 paragraph does not preclude legitimate advice or
 10 advocacy consistent with these Rules.

11 In addition to this subsection of existing Rule 8.4, Model Rule 8.4(g)
 12 includes three new accompanying comments defining various terms
 13 within Rule 8.4(g). The Petition does not explicitly include these new
 14 comments, but if the Rule were to be adopted these comments
 15 would assuredly be relied on for guidance. The most relevant of
 16 these are Comments 3 and 4.

17 Comment 3 defines “discrimination and harassment” under
 18 Rule 8.4(g) as including “harmful verbal or physical conduct that
 19 manifests bias or prejudice towards others. Harassment includes
 20 sexual harassment and derogatory or demeaning verbal or physical
 conduct. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances,
 requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcome verbal or physical
 conduct of a sexual nature” The Comment also provides that

1 “[t]he substantive law of antidiscrimination and anti-harassment
2 statutes and case law may guide application of paragraph (g).”

3 Comment 4 states that “Conduct related to the practice of law
4 includes representing clients; interacting with witnesses, coworkers,
5 court personnel, lawyers and others while engaged in the practice
6 of law; operating or managing a law firm or law practice; and
7 participating in bar associations, business or social activities in
8 connection with the practice of law.” It also specifies that “[l]awyers
9 may engage in conduct undertaken to promote diversity and
10 inclusion without violating this Rule by, for example, implementing
11 initiatives aimed at recruiting, hiring, retaining and advancing
12 diverse employees or sponsoring diverse law student organizations.”
13 Model Rule 8.4(g) thus explicitly permits discrimination so long as it is
14 done for the sake of “diversity.”

15 **2.0 Most Other States Have Rejected ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) as**
16 **Written, and the Only State That Failed to Do So Acted in the**
17 **Absence of Any Comment on the Rule**

18 The Petition states that 24 other jurisdictions have adopted anti-
19 discrimination rules, but this misleads the Court because *almost no*
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1 other state has adopted this version of Model Rule 8.4(g). Rule 8.4(g)
 2 is not a duplicate of any other state's version of a rule dealing with
 3 bias, and has broad implications. Anti-discrimination rules may be
 4 permissible and even desirable, but *this particular one is not*.

5 Several states have *rejected* Rule 8.4(g) because it violates the
 6 First Amendment:

- 7 • In December of 2016, the Texas Attorney General issued a
 8 formal opinion stating that Rule 8.4(g) would violate the First
 9 Amendment because it restricts speech and conduct far
 10 beyond the context of practice of law. (See TX A.G. Opinion
 11 No. KP-0123, attached as **Exhibit 1**.)¹
- 12 • In January 2017, Pennsylvania's Disciplinary Board proposed an
 13 anti-discrimination amendment to the State's Rule 8.4, but
 14 Pennsylvania explicitly rejected the language of ABA Rule
 15 8.4(g), adopting instead a rule similar to the narrower Illinois
 16 Rule 8.4(j), which states that it would be misconduct to violate
 17 a federal, state, or local statute that prohibits discrimination.

19 ¹ Available at: <[https://www.texasattorney
 20 general.gov/opinion/ken-paxton-opinions](https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/opinion/ken-paxton-opinions)> (last accessed [DATE]).

(See Illinois Rules of Professional Responsibility, attached as **Exhibit 2.**)²

- In April 2017, the Montana legislature passed a joint resolution condemning Rule 8.4(g) as an unconstitutional attempt to restrict the First Amendment rights of attorneys. (See Montana Senate Joint Resolution No. 15, attached as **Exhibit 3.**)³
- In 2017, the Nevada Bar filed a petition to adopt Rule 8.4(g), but in September of 2017 withdrew it in the face of criticism of its constitutionality. (See request to withdraw petition to adopt Rule 8.4(g), attached as **Exhibit 4.**)
- In March 2018, the Tennessee Attorney General issued a formal opinion stating that Rule 8.4(g) “would violate the constitutional rights of Tennessee attorneys and conflict with the existing Rules of Professional Conduct.” (See Tenn. AG Opinion No. 18-11, attached as **Exhibit 5.**)⁴

² Available at: http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/SupremeCourt/Rules/Art_VIII/ArtVIII_NEW.htm#8.4 (last accessed [DATE]).

³ Available at: <http://leg.mt.gov/bills/2017/billhtml/SJ0015.htm> (last accessed [DATE]).

⁴ Available at: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/attorneygeneral/documents/ops/2018/op18-11.pdf> (last accessed [DATE]).

1 These states rejected Rule 8.4(g) because it is unconstitutional.
2 The only state to adopt Rule 8.4(g) is Vermont, and it only did so
3 because no one filed any comments in opposition to it. There is no
4 reason for Arizona to follow suit.

5 **3.0 Rule 8.4(g) Violates the First Amendment**

6 Lawyers do not surrender their First Amendment Rights for the
7 privilege of practicing law.⁵ Rule 8.4(g) punishes and restricts speech
8 if it is “harmful,” “demeaning,” or “derogatory.”⁶ What do those
9 words mean? For example, the speech must be “derogatory” to
10 whom? The Rule does not say, and the proposed comments to fail
11 to provide any meaningful guidance, ensuring that no attorney in
12 Arizona will have any idea when their use of language might run
13 afoul of the rule.

14 Worse still, the Rule is not being pushed in order to confront a
15 real problem. Rather, it will do nothing but ensure there is always a

17 ⁵ See *Gentile v. State Bar of Nevada*, 501 U.S. 1030, 1054 (1991) (the
18 Nevada Bar could not punish free speech that is protected by the First
19 Amendment); *Shapero v. Ky. Bar Ass’n*, 486 U.S. 466, 469 (1988) (the First
20 Amendment applies to state bar disciplinary actions through the Fourteenth
Amendment).

⁶ See Model Rules of Prof’l Conduct. 8.4(g) Cmt. 3 (Am. Bar Ass’n 2016).

1 speech-trap for any lawyer who sticks his or her neck out on issues
2 that might be controversial. It chills advocacy, chills activism, and
3 makes the Bar the would-be-censor of anyone who holds a bar
4 license.

5 A restriction on speech is content-based when it either seeks to
6 restrict, or on its face restricts, a particular subject matter.⁷ Any
7 restriction on speech based on the message conveyed is
8 presumptively unconstitutional.⁸ This presumption becomes stronger
9 when a government restriction is based not just on subject matter,
10 but on a particular viewpoint expressed about that subject.⁹ The
11 government cannot be allowed to impose restrictions on speech
12 where the rationale for the restriction is the opinion or viewpoint of
13 the speaker.¹⁰

14 Rule 8.4(g) is incredibly broad and is an unconstitutional
15 viewpoint-based restriction on speech because it only restricts
16 speech espousing certain viewpoints regarding certain topics about

17 ⁷ See *Rosenberger v. Rector & Visitors of the Univ. of Va.*, 515 U.S. 819, 828
(1995). **[maybe add a reference to Reed?]**

18 ⁸ See *Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., v. FCC*, 512 U.S. 622, 641-43 (1994).

19 ⁹ See *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul*, 505 U.S. 377, 391 (1992).

20 ¹⁰ See *Perry Ed. Assn. v. Perry Local Educators' Assn.*, 460 U.S. 37, 46 (1983);
see also *Matal v. Tam*, 137 S. Ct. 1744, 1763 (2017) (finding bar on registration of
"disparaging" trademarks unconstitutional viewpoint-based discrimination).

1 certain groups of people.¹¹ Attorneys can say that all women are
2 beautiful, but not that all men are pigs. They can say that senior
3 citizens are wise, but not that kids are stupid. Under a literal reading
4 of the rule, an attorney could extoll the virtues of Mormonism but
5 would face possible disbarment for calling Pastafarianism a joke.

6 This viewpoint-based restriction on attorney speech will have a
7 chilling effect on an attorney's ability to engage in disfavored
8 political dialogues or debates. A lawyer's trade is to speak for and
9 represent others, but Rule 8.4(g) pits an attorney's ability to be able
10 to speak for others against a threat of a bar complaint if someone
11 considers the speech "offensive." In fact, the rule is drafted so
12 broadly it could even punish expression of popular, mainstream
13 opinions that someone on the ideological fringe finds offensive.

14 The point of protecting free speech is to shield the speaker who
15 may say something misguided or hurtful in another's eyes.¹² Rule

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17 ¹¹ See *R.A.V.*, 505 U.S. 377 ("The First Amendment does not permit St. Paul to impose special prohibitions on those speakers who express views on disfavored subjects.")

18 ¹² See *Snyder v. Phelps*, 562 U.S. 443, 458 (2011) (citing *Hurley v. Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston, Inc.*, 515 U. S. 557, 574 (1995)); see also *Texas v. Johnson*, 491 U. S. 397, 414 (1989) ("If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself

1 8.4(g) does more than restrict what an attorney may say in open
2 Court; its plain language restricts what an attorney may say in a
3 multitude of social situations, as well. If the Bar wishes to govern
4 attorney speech in a courtroom, that is perhaps reasonable (though
5 even there viewpoint discrimination would be presumptively uncon-
6 stitutional). But, this proposed rule does far more than that. It is a
7 measure that seeks to govern attorney speech no matter where and
8 when it might occur, unless that speech is 100% disassociated from
9 any tangent of the lawyer's practice.

10 The ABA defines speech "related" to the practice of law as: (1)
11 representing clients; (2) interacting with witnesses, coworkers, court
12 personnel, lawyers and others while engaged in the practice of law;
13 and (3) participating in social activities, such as attending bar
14 association meetings, or other business or social activities in
15 connection with the practice of law.¹³ Rule 8.4(g) contradicts
16 paramount First Amendment protections because it restricts an

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18 offensive or disagreeable."); and see *Roth v. United States*, 354 U.S. 476, 484
19 (1957) ("All ideas having even the slightest redeeming social importance, e.g.,
unorthodox ideas, controversial ideas, even ideas hateful to the prevailing
climate of opinion – fall within the full protection of the First Amendment").

20 ¹³ See Model Rules of Prof'l Conduct. 8.4(g) Cmt. 4 (Am. Bar Ass'n 2016).

1 attorney's ability to express an opinion or engage in good faith
2 debate at a local bar meeting, and it would chill law professors and
3 practitioners alike from writing engaging law review articles that may
4 offend some.

5 An attorney could risk disciplinary action simply for making an
6 argument, supported by factual data, with an unpopular
7 conclusion. For example, if a female plaintiff in a workplace
8 discrimination suit claimed the court should presume a policy of
9 gender discrimination because all her co-workers are men, the
10 defendant's attorney could face Bar discipline for countering with a
11 study showing that gender discrimination is more common in co-ed
12 offices.¹⁴ Rule 8.4(g) has the potential to limit the development of
13 the legal profession and stymie the continuing legal education of
14 attorneys in Arizona. Perhaps not every potentially controversial
15 topic would run afoul of Rule 8.4(g), but the *possibility* of violating the
16 rule would inevitably cause lawyers in Arizona to shy away from

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¹⁴ This problem is not solved by the rule's allowance of otherwise objectionable conduct that constitutes "legitimate advice or advocacy consistent with these Rules," either. There is no guidance as to what makes advocacy under this rule "legitimate" or "illegitimate."

1 addressing any controversial issue in any setting remotely connected
2 to the practice of law.¹⁵

3 Even worse, Rule 8.4(g) could very well make it an ethical
4 violation simply to *represent* clients who are being sued for speech
5 that mainstream society does not consider acceptable. For
6 example, say a female college professor is fired for espousing the
7 viewpoint in class that women are genetically superior to men, and
8 then files a suit against the college for wrongful termination. An
9 attorney may risk discipline for representing the woman and, outside
10 the courtroom, making any statement about her viewpoint that is
11 not a full-throated condemnation of it.¹⁶ This could very easily lead
12 to an environment where citizens with unpopular opinions would be
13 precluded from obtaining effective legal representation. This same
14 reasoning applies to controversial religious organizations; attorneys
15 would be wary of representing controversial organizations such as

16 ¹⁵ See, e.g., *Baggett v. Bullitt*, 377 U.S. 360, 372 (1964) (“indefinite statutes”
17 with “uncertain meanings” require that speakers “steer far wider of the unlawful
zone than if the boundaries of the forbidden area were clearly marked”)
(quoting *Speiser v. Randall*, 357 U.S. 513, 526 (1958)) (internal citation omitted).

18 ¹⁶ Arizona Rule 1.2(b) establishes that representing a client is not an endorse-
19 ment of that client's views or activities, but it does not take much imagination to
20 conceive of a situation where an attorney declining to condemn a client's
“discriminatory” viewpoint could invoke a disciplinary proceeding under Rule
8.4(g).

1 the Westboro Baptist Church, for fear of violating Rule 8.4(g) by
2 making any statement about the Church or its views in any context
3 other than direct courtroom advocacy.

4 As discussed in more detail below, FALA is in no way opposed
5 to the Arizona Bar adopting a content-neutral rule that curtails
6 harassment and discrimination. In fact, FALA would support a rule
7 that accomplishes these worthy goals if the rule does not violate the
8 First Amendment or other protections provided by the U.S.
9 Constitution, such as due process. FALA stands firm, however, that it
10 does not support rule 8.4(g), because it will be used as a weapon to
11 silence attorneys with diverse opinions.

12 **4.0 Distinguished First Amendment Scholars Have Spoken Out** 13 **Against ABA Model Rule 8.4(g)**

14 Many First Amendment scholars have spoken out against Rule
15 8.4(g), including:

- 16 • Distinguished First Amendment Professor Eugene Volokh¹⁷ has
17 noted that passing a law that disciplines attorneys for speech

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19 ¹⁷ Professor Volokh is the editor of the *Volokh Conspiracy* at the *Washington*
20 *Post* and is the author of the treatise *The First Amendment and Related Statutes*

1 would stifle debate within the legal community for fear of
 2 disciplinary reprimand. (See Eugene Volokh, “Texas AG: Lawyer
 3 speech code proposed by the American Bar Association would
 4 violate the First Amendment,” WASHINGTON POST (Dec. 20, 2016),
 5 attached as **Exhibit 6.**)¹⁸

- 6 • Professor Ronald Rotunda¹⁹ noted that under the ABA Model
 7 Rule, if two attorneys spoke on a panel, and an attorney said
 8 “Black Lives Matter,” the attorney who responds “Blue Lives
 9 Matter” could be subject to discipline under this Rule. Candid
 10 debates about illegal immigration or gender-neutral bathrooms
 11 would likely involve discussions about national origin, sexual
 12 orientation, and gender identity, which means that participants
 13 in the debate would be subject to discipline, depending
 14 entirely on the speaker’s stance or viewpoint. (See the

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 16 (West 2013). He teaches at the University of California Los Angeles School of Law
 <<http://www2.law.ucla.edu/volokh/>>.

17 ¹⁸ Available at: <[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-
 18 conspiracy/wp/2016/12/20/texas-ag-lawyer-speech-code-proposed-by-
 19 american-bar-association-would-violate-the-first-amendment/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2016/12/20/texas-ag-lawyer-speech-code-proposed-by-american-bar-association-would-violate-the-first-amendment/)> (last accessed
 20 [DATE]).

¹⁹ Professor Rotunda is the author of the treatise *American Constitutional
 Law* (Volumes 1 & 2) (West 2016) and *Legal Ethics: The Lawyer’s Deskbook on
 Professional Responsibility* (ABA-Thomson Reuters 2016). He teaches at
 Chapman University <<https://www.chapman.edu/our-faculty/ronald-rotunda/>>.

1 National Lawyers Association Task Force Statement on the New
 2 ABA Model Rule 8.4(g), attached as **Exhibit 7.**)²⁰

- 3 • Professor Josh Blackman²¹ has noted that Rule 8.4(g) will affect
 4 the types of hypotheticals and debates law school professors
 5 can pose to students, because law professors who have active
 6 law licenses could worry about offending a student and being
 7 faced with a bar complaint. (See Josh Blackman, “My
 8 Rejected Proposal for the AALS President’s Program on
 9 Diversity: The Effect of Model Rule of Professional Conduct
 10 8.4(g) and Law School Pedagogy and Academic Freedom”
 11 (Nov. 15, 2016), attached as **Exhibit 8.**)²²

12 The Court should heed the warnings of these preeminent First
 13 Amendment scholars and note the serious consequences the
 14 passage of 8.4(g) would have on free speech and debate. We
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16 ²⁰ Available at: <<http://www.nla.org/nla-task-force-publishes-statement-on-new-aba-model-rule-8-4g/>> (last accessed [DATE]).

17 ²¹ Professor Blackman is the author of *Reply: A Pause for State Courts Considering Model Rule 8.4(G) The First Amendment and “Conduct Related to the Practice of Law”*, 30 GEO. J. LEGAL ETHICS (2017). He teaches at South Texas College of Law <<http://www.stcl.edu/about-us/faculty/josh-blackman/>>.

18 ²² Available at: <<http://joshblackman.com/blog/2016/11/15/my-rejected-proposal-for-the-aals-presidents-program-on-diversity-the-effect-of-model-rule-of-professional-conduct-8-4g-and-law-school-pedagogy-and-academic-freedom/>> (last accessed [DATE]).

1 should not seek to censor lawyers who engage in debate at bar
2 conferences, in law school classrooms, and in law review articles.
3 Rather, we should engage people we do not agree with, and
4 present them with better arguments. If someone holds an offensive
5 viewpoint, it is better to try to change that person's mind than to shut
6 them up.

7 **5.0 ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) is Unconstitutionally Vague**

8 The government violates the due process clause of the Fifth
9 and Fourteenth Amendments when it takes someone's life, liberty, or
10 property without due process by passing a law that is so vague that
11 that it does not give ordinary people fair notice of the conduct it
12 punishes, or is so standard-less that it invites arbitrary enforcement.²³
13 Rule 8.4 is unconstitutionally vague because it does not draw a clear
14 line between what conduct is "related to the practice of law" and
15 what conduct is not. There is no clear line regarding what is merely
16 an unpopular opinion, and what is discriminatory. Conduct that is
17 *related* to law is incredibly vague, and as analyzed above, could
18 include a multitude of activities.

19 ²³ See *Johnson v. United States*, 135 S. Ct. 2551, 2553 (2015); see also
20 *Kolender v. Lawson*, 461 U.S. 352 (1983).

1 The term “[h]arassment includes sexual harassment and
2 derogatory or demeaning verbal or physical conduct.”²⁴ In addition
3 to being a guaranteed chill on speech, there is no way for any
4 member of the legal community to know prospectively what
5 language may be “derogatory or demeaning.” Is this judged from
6 the subjective viewpoint of the speaker’s audience, the subjective
7 viewpoint of a third party who hears the speech afterward, or some
8 objective standard that is applied regardless of whether anyone
9 actually found the statements “derogatory or demeaning?”

10 Furthermore, words or conduct that potentially fit this
11 terminology will necessarily change over time, unnecessarily
12 burdening attorneys with the obligation to continue educating
13 themselves on these constantly shifting definitions. As explained
14 below, if this is the Bar’s goal, it should instead impose elimination-of-
15 bias MCLE requirements. See *infra* § 6.0.

16 The definition of “discrimination” is no clearer; it “includes
17 harmful verbal or physical conduct that manifests bias or prejudice
18 towards others.” This is an utterly unintelligible standard that

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20 ²⁴ Comment 3 to Rule 8.4(g).

1 necessarily requires attorneys to guess which statements are
2 permitted and which are not. With the possibility of disciplinary
3 action for a wrong statement, lawyers will inevitably curb speech
4 they have a right to express.

5 In particular, Rule 8.4(g) punishes speech that discriminates
6 against “socioeconomic status,” a term that is not defined by the
7 ABA or any other anti-discrimination statute. Socio-economic status
8 is vague because there is no bright line rule about what this entails.
9 A lawyer could be subject to discipline for “discriminating” against
10 someone who is unable to pay a retainer fee. A lawyer could also
11 be subject to discipline for speaking out against “the 1%” – as this
12 could be deemed discriminatory on this basis.

13 Professor Volokh notes that the socioeconomic discrimination
14 language is so vague that there are many examples of conduct that
15 could lead to attorney discipline:

- 16 • A law firm preferring more-educated employees over less
17 educated ones.
- 18 • A law firm preferring employees who went to high status
19 institutions, such as Ivy League schools, over Tier 4 law schools.

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- A solo practitioner who prefers a would-be partner who has more resources to help weather hard times, over a would-be partner who has zero savings.
- A law firm contracting with an expert witness and/or an expert consultant who is especially well-educated or has an especially prestigious employer.

(See Eugene Volokh, “Banning Lawyers From Discriminating Based on ‘Socioeconomic Status’ in Choosing Partners, Employees or Experts,” WASHINGTON POST (Aug. 10, 2016), attached as **Exhibit 9**.)²⁵

An additional problem with the vagaries inherent in these terms is that they **beg** for selective enforcement. Without any intelligible definitions of “harassment” or “discrimination,” the Bar would be free to prosecute any attorney at any time; no one on Earth has failed to make a statement at some point in their life that someone could find offensive. Furthermore, the Bar is the sole arbiter of what is “harassment” or “discrimination,” which has the potential of leading to the absurd result of an attorney being disciplined for making a

²⁵ Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2016/05/05/banning-lawyers-from-discriminating-based-on-socioeconomic-status-in-choosing-partners-employees-or-experts/?utm_term=.beabb7cea8fe> (last accessed [DATE]).

1 “disparaging” statement that the allegedly “disparaged” audience
2 does not actually find “disparaging.”

3 Rule 8.4(g) is unconstitutionally vague because an ordinary
4 person - even one schooled in the practice of law - would not be
5 able to read the rule and understand what is conduct related to the
6 practice of law or what statements constitute discrimination or
7 harassment, and it encourages (and even necessitates) selective
8 enforcement. Arizona must reject Rule 8.4(g).

9 **6.0 The Arizona Bar Should Adopt an Elimination of Bias Rule,** 10 **Rather than ABA Model Rule 8.4(g)**

11 Eliminating bias from the profession is a laudable goal – and
12 one that can be achieved through constitutional and honest means
13 that are not subject to abuse. The Court should reject Rule 8.4(g) for
14 the reasons stated above, but the Court should consider that there
15 are many different anti-harassment and anti-discrimination rules that
16 have already been adopted by other states. None of the rules
17 adopted in other states are as broad as Rule 8.4(g).

18 If the Arizona Bar wants to craft a bias rule modeled from
19 another state, there are two major distinctions between the
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1 language in other states' rules and Model Rule 8.4(g). These
2 distinctions also highlight the major deficiencies with Rule 8.4(g).

3 (1) **Conduct:** Most states have a narrow interpretation of
4 "conduct" and restrict only conduct in the course of
5 representing a client. (See "Anti-Bias Provisions in the State
6 Rules of Professional Conduct, App. B, ABA Standing Comm. on
7 Ethics and Professional Responsibility, Language Choices
8 Narrative" (July 16, 2015), attached as **Exhibit 10.**)²⁶ Rule 8.4(g)
9 has a sweeping approach that exposes attorneys to discipline
10 for any conduct *related* to the practice of law (such as
11 speaking on a panel at a bar meeting or engaging in a debate
12 with a colleague).

13 (2) **Breaking the Law:** Most states limit discrimination to an
14 act that breaks a federal, state, or local law and requires that
15 there be a finding by a court that the attorney engaged in
16 discrimination. Rule 8.4(g) is subjective and allows anyone who
17 is offended by something an attorney says to file a bar
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19 ²⁶ Available at: <http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/professional_responsibility/language_choice_narrative_with_appendices_final.authcheckdam.pdf> (last accessed [DATE]).
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1 complaint at their discretion. Comment 3 to Rule 8.4(g) pro-
2 vides only that state law “may guide application of paragraph
3 (g),” not that it is determinative.

4 A better option Arizona could adopt is a carrot rather than a
5 stick approach: it could make one credit of Eliminating Bias a
6 Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (“MCLE”) in Arizona. States
7 like California and Minnesota require attorneys to take elimination-
8 of-bias as a CLE every year. FALA has incorporated eliminating bias
9 credits into both 2017 FALA meetings, not only for the benefit of the
10 members who need the credit, but because it is important for all
11 members.

12 Eliminating bias in the profession is a worthy policy to pursue.
13 The Arizona Bar should take steps to eliminate bias. However,
14 adopting Model Rule 8.4(g) is absolutely the wrong way to
15 approach this problem because it is unconstitutional on its face and
16 violates the First Amendment.

17 **7.0 Conclusion**

18 A lawyer who violates the Rules of Professional Conduct may
19 suffer serious consequences, which can range from a letter of
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1 reprimand to disbarment. Rule 8.4(g) is the only model rule that
2 dictates an attorney can be disciplined for something that has
3 nothing to do with that attorney's ability to practice law or handle
4 client trust accounts. Rather, it dictates what types of views an
5 attorney is allowed to have and say publicly. Attorneys should be
6 free to practice law without fear of voicing an unpopular opinion.
7 Rule 8.4(g) has no rational relationship to securing the integrity of the
8 practice of law in Arizona, and instead is one step removed from
9 legislating thoughtcrime.

10 Arizona should not join the dubious company of Vermont as a
11 state to adopt ABA Model Rule 8.4(g). Members of the Arizona Bar
12 took an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and
13 have a duty not to adopt a rule that violates the Constitution.
14 Arizona should follow the lead of other states and heed the advice
15 of this nation's First Amendment scholars: Arizona should reject this
16 rule, and only adopt a measure that eliminates bias if it does not
17 violate the Constitution.

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Dated May XX, 2018.

Randazza Legal Group, PLLC

/s/

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Draft