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2014 MAY 28 A 10: 09

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The Florida Supreme Court
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1927

BY _____

Re: Proposed Amendment to RULE 1-7.3 Membership Dues

To the Honorable Members of the Florida Supreme Court,

I am writing this letter in response to an article that appeared in the most recent issue of the Florida Bar News concerning amending the above listed rule to allow the Board of Governors the authority to increase our dues by One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) per year to fund the Legal Aid to the Poor Program of the The Florida Bar Foundation.

Please accept this letter as my objection to any such amendment. I have practiced law in Florida for over forty-two (42) years and it has become harder and harder for a lawyer in Florida to make a decent living from the practice of law. We need no additional expenses.

I first noticed this trend starting back in the 80's and it has increased ever since. The causes are many. First and foremost is the fact that we now have so many law schools and the numbers being graduated in all those schools has increased tremendously also. Thus we simply have too many lawyers. Secondly it has been the position of the Florida Bar to make available to the general public the tools necessary to do their own legal work without the benefit of a lawyer. There are many examples but I won't waste your time listing them. I often see the results of this "self representation" and the many problems it creates.

For all my time as a member of the Florida Bar it seems the goal of the bar to have lawyers give away their time to help the poor. I think the feeling is that it will somehow improve the image of lawyers in this state. That goal of improving our image is a total failure. I do not understand why lawyers should bear the responsibility of free legal services to those who cannot afford an attorney. Other professions do not give their services free. Instead the governments (Federal and State) bear that burden so it is shared by all of us who pay taxes. That should be the case with legal services also. There is no push for that to happen when the Florida Bar seeks to undertake that duty but then it falls on us to bear the costs.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Berk

