NAJIT
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March 1, 2026
Elizabeth Kingston-Miller
Clerk of Court
Michigan Supreme Court
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Cc: bbogue@ncsc.org, advocacy@najit.org

Re: Comments from the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) on ADM File No. 2025-03: Proposed Amendment of Rule 1.111 of the Michigan Court Rules

To the Honorable Justices of the Michigan Supreme Court:

NAJIT wishes to express our appreciation for the proposed amendment to Michigan Court Rule 1.111 concerning the use of foreign language interpreters in civil court proceedings at no cost to limited English proficient (LEP) individuals. If adopted, this proposed change would constitute substantial progress toward delivering equal access to justice for LEP individuals in Michigan.

Founded in 1978, NAJIT represents more than 1,100 court interpreters, translators, judicial officers, scholars, and trainers dedicated to advancing professional standards and ensuring equal access to justice for LEP individuals. We fully support the Court's proposal in subrules (F)(4) and (F)(5) to eliminate the possibility that parties in civil cases be required to reimburse the court for the interpretation costs in their cases. Our comments today mirror our August 1, 2025, submission concerning the rule on interpreter costs for criminal court proceedings. We write both to commend the Court for adopting the 2025 amendment eliminating interpreter fees in criminal cases and to renew our recommendation that the same rights be afforded to LEP individuals in civil proceedings.

The provision of interpreter services at no cost in civil proceedings is in alignment with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment of the Constitution. It is a protection that the United States Department of Justice has reiterated over the years.[1] Adoption of the proposed rules amendment would add Michigan to the majority of states that have already done away with charges to LEP individuals in both criminal and civil hearings. Ensuring language access without the financial burden falling on the LEP individual protects the accuracy and legitimacy of the proceedings themselves by reducing the likelihood that LEP individuals would avoid litigation altogether or attempt to navigate litigation without the services

[1] U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. "Letter to State Courts." 8/16/2010. https://web.archive.org/web/20251026212845/https:/www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/oalj/PUBLIC/APA/REFERENCES/MISCELLANEOUS/final_courts_ltr_081610.pdf

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of qualified court interpreters. The proposed expansion of no-cost language access will likely mean LEP individuals will be more inclined to engage with the justice system and will experience more equitable results.

For these reasons, NAJIT strongly encourages the Court to extend the elimination of interpreter fees to civil proceedings and thereby ensure equal access to justice for all LEP individuals in Michigan's courts.

We appreciate the Court's leadership in improving language access in Michigan's courts and thank you for the opportunity to write in support of this important rule. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or for additional input.

Respectfully submitted,

The NAJIT Board of Directors

For additional information or clarification, please contact NAJIT at hq@najit.org

Endorsed by:

American Association of Interpreters and Translators in Education (AAITE)
American Translators Association (ATA)
Association of Language Companies (ALC)
Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI)
National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC)

cc: NAJIT Advocacy Committee
Brooke Bogue, Language Access Services Section Manager, National Center for State Courts