



Supreme Court of California
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supreme Court Eliminates Ethics Exception that Permitted Judges to Belong to Nonprofit Youth Organizations That Discriminate

SAN FRANCISCO—The Supreme Court of California unanimously voted to eliminate an exception in Canon 2C of the [California Code of Judicial Ethics](#) that permitted judges to belong to nonprofit youth organizations that practice invidious discrimination.

The Supreme Court adopted the recommendation of its [Advisory Committee on the Code of Judicial Ethics](#) to eliminate an exception to an ethics rule that prohibits judges from holding membership in any organization that practices invidious discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The prior rule permitted an exception for nonprofit youth organizations.

The proposed rule change was sent out for public comment last year, and the change was supported by the California Judges Association. The amended rule is now consistent with the American Bar Association’s Model Code of Judicial Conduct. Judges will have until January 21, 2016 to comply with the new rule.

“The only remaining exception to the general rule is membership in a religious organization,” said Fourth District Court of Appeal Justice Richard D. Frybel, chair of the Supreme Court’s Advisory Committee on the Code of Judicial Ethics. “One other exception—belonging to a military organization—was eliminated as well, because the U.S. armed forces no longer restrict military service based on sexual orientation.”

Under the California Constitution, the Supreme Court adopts the Code of Judicial Ethics, which establishes standards of ethical conduct for state judges on and off the bench and for candidates for judicial officer.

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The Supreme Court of California is the state’s highest court and its decisions are binding on all other California state courts. The court’s primary role is to decide matters of statewide importance and to maintain uniformity in the

law throughout California by reviewing matters from the six districts of the California Courts of Appeal and the fifty-eight county superior courts (the trial courts). Among its other duties, the court also decides all capital appeals and related matters and reviews both attorney and judicial disciplinary matters.