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STATE OF NEVADA

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL ETHICS
AND ELECTION PRACTICES

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ADVISORY OPINION: JE10-015

PROPRIETY OF A JUDGE USING
JUDICIAL LETTERHEAD AND COURT
RESOURCES TO SEND LETTER TO
JURORS FOLLOWING COMPLETION
OF TRIAL THANKING THEM FOR
SERVICE

ISSUE

May a judge use court resources to
prepare and send a letter to jurors following
their release from jury duty thanking them
for their service and asking for input on
improving the experience of jury service?

ANSWER

Yes.

FACTS

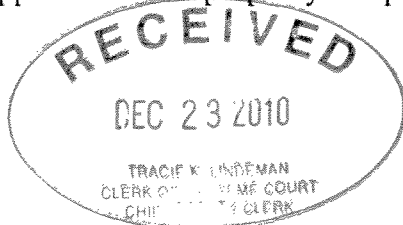
A judge asks whether it would be a
violation of the Code if the judge used court
resources, including court staff, equipment
and letterhead, to prepare and send a letter to
jurors following their release from jury duty,
thanking the jurors for their service and
asking for input on how to improve the jury
service experience.

DISCUSSION

Canon 1 states that "A judge shall
uphold and promote the independence,
integrity and impartiality of the judiciary
and shall avoid impropriety and the
appearance of impropriety." Specific to this

issue, Rule 1.3 provides that a "judge shall
not abuse the prestige of judicial office to
advance the personal or economic interests
of the judge or others, or allow others to do
so." Comment 1 to Rule 1.3 prohibits
judges from using "judicial letterhead to
gain an advantage in conducting his or her
personal business." Similarly, Rule 3.1(E)
prohibits a judge from making "use of court
premises, staff, stationery, equipment, or
other resources" for extrajudicial purposes,
except where incidental and related to the
legal system or administration of justice.

The Committee believes using court
resources to prepare and send a letter
thanking jurors for their service after their
release from jury duty and seeking input to
improve the administration of justice is a
communication in furtherance of a judge's
official duties and does not implicate the
type of communications prohibited by Rule
1.3 or 3.1. The Committee also notes that
such communications promote public
understanding and confidence in the
administration of justice and are encouraged
by the comments to Rule 1.2. *See* Rule 1.2,
Comment 6. The Committee reminds
judges to be cognizant of the limitations in
Rule 2.8 when engaging in any
communications with jurors, and to avoid
commending or criticizing jurors for their
verdict.



CONCLUSION

It is the opinion of the Committee that a judge may use court resources to prepare and send a letter to jurors after their release from jury service for the purpose of thanking the jurors for their service and soliciting input on ways to improve the juror experience.

REFERENCES

Revised Nevada Code of Judicial Conduct, Canon 1; Rule 1.2; Rule 1.3; Rule 2.8; Rule 3.1; Commentary to Rule 1.2; Commentary to Rule 1.3.

This opinion is issued by the Standing Committee on Judicial Ethics and Election Practices. It is advisory only. It is not binding upon the courts, the State Bar of Nevada, the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline, any person or tribunal charged with regulatory responsibilities, any member of the Nevada judiciary, or any person or entity which requested the opinion.



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