

## **27 NCAC 02 RULE 8.2 JUDICIAL AND LEGAL OFFICIALS**

(a) A lawyer shall not make a statement that the lawyer knows to be false or with reckless disregard as to its truth or falsity concerning the qualifications or integrity of a judge, or other adjudicatory officer or of a candidate for election or appointment to judicial office.

(b) A lawyer who is a candidate for judicial office shall comply with the applicable provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

### **Comment**

[1] Assessments by lawyers are relied on in evaluating the professional or personal fitness of persons being considered for election or appointment to judicial office. Expressing honest and candid opinions on such matters contributes to improving the administration of justice. Conversely, false statements by a lawyer can unfairly undermine public confidence in the administration of justice.

[2] When a lawyer seeks judicial office, the lawyer should be bound by applicable limitations on political activity.

[3] To maintain the fair and independent administration of justice, lawyers are encouraged to continue traditional efforts to defend judges and courts unjustly criticized. Adjudicatory officials, not being wholly free to defend themselves, are entitled to receive the support of the bar against such unjust criticism.

[4] While a lawyer as a citizen has a right to criticize such officials publicly, the lawyer should be certain of the merit of the complaint, use appropriate language, and avoid petty criticisms, for unrestrained and intemperate statements tend to lessen public confidence in our legal system. Criticisms motivated by reasons other than a desire to improve the legal system are not justified.

*History Note:* Authority G.S. 84-23;  
Eff. July 24, 1997;  
Amended Eff. February 27, 2003.