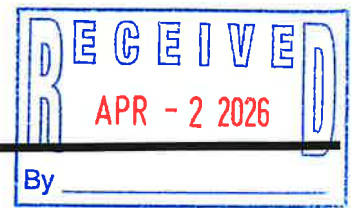


Kim Meador



From: April Burns-Norris <Aprilnorris008@advocatefor.me>
Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2026 11:02 AM
To: appellatecourtclerk
Subject: Authorize Nonlawyer Legal Help in Tennessee: Comments on No. ADM2025-01403

ADM2025-01403

Warning: Unusual sender <aprilnorris008@advocatefor.me>

You don't usually receive emails from this address. Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

Dear Clerk Hivner and Honorable Justices of the Tennessee Supreme Court,

I am writing in response to the Court's request for comments on the regulation of the legal profession and the access-to-justice crisis. I strongly support the Tennessee Supreme Court allowing people without law degrees—like legal helpers or community justice workers—to deliver legal services and help with basic civil legal needs.

In support of the Institute for Justice and in response to the Tennessee Supreme Court's request for public comments concerning the growing access-to-justice crisis, I submit the following: Legal services currently provided by lawyers can be competently provided by paraprofessionals with short, easy-to-access training and/or evidence of successful volunteer assistance with basic civil legal needs with an emphasis on evictions, probate matters and benefits paperwork. The State of Tennessee as well as the rest of America are experiencing a homelessness epidemic and affordable housing crisis. The existing resources like court appointed mediation and Legal Services Corporation (LSC) representation is insufficient due to the absence of assistance before an eviction is filed and the mediation only applicable for cases with neither party having legal representation. There also appears to be a form of conflict of interest with these agencies representing tenants in cases against public housing authorities and corporate attorneys. The outcome of most cases with LSC representation is agreed move outs. It is very rare that tenants have their legal defenses heard or the right to damages taken seriously. This is ultimately denial of due process and denied access to justice. Housing is the foundation to accessing the "American Dream". When LAS and Courts are not fully protecting tenant's rights, this results in preventable evictions, which is a miscarriage of justice that denies access to the building block of healthy, thriving families and communities.

Across our state, many people cannot obtain the legal help they need. Lawyers are simply too expensive for most families, and in many counties there are not enough attorneys available.

I encourage the Court to prioritize low-barrier solutions that make basic legal help available right away. Legal helpers could complete short, practical training focused on specific subjects and provide assistance through trusted institutions such as nonprofits, libraries, faith groups, and businesses. Requiring lengthy training or expensive credentials risks recreating the same lawyer-only bottleneck under a new label.

The Court should also recognize that certain forms of basic legal assistance—like helping someone navigate court procedures or complete standard paperwork—are low-risk activities that should fall outside Unauthorized Practice of Law restrictions. Creating clear carveouts for this type of help would

expand access without sacrificing consumer protection. Tennesseans already benefit from existing consumer protection laws that safeguard against misconduct.

I'm grateful that the Tennessee Supreme Court is leading this effort to reform and modernize our legal system. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue.

Sincerely,
April Burns-Norris
Hermitage, TN
Aprilnorris008@gmail.com