



NEW YORK STATE
Unified Court System

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION

LAWRENCE K. MARKS
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

EILEEN D. MILLETT
COUNSEL

MEMORANDUM

To: All Interested Persons

From: Eileen D. Millett

Re: Request for Public Comment on Proposal to Harmonize Matrimonial Rules with new Uniform Civil Rules

Date: October 26, 2021

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The Administrative Board of the Courts is seeking public comment on a proposal to amend the Uniform Civil Rules for the Supreme and County Courts and the matrimonial rules (Exhibit A). This Request for Public Comment should be considered in conjunction with the October 1 Request for Public Comment to amend the Uniform Civil Rules.¹ A sub-committee of the Matrimonial Practice Advisory and Rules Committee met with a working group chaired by former Presiding Justice Alan Scheinkman, and together they have proposed further amendments to the Uniform Civil Rules, with a particular emphasis on the matrimonial rules. The full Matrimonial Practice Advisory and Rules Committee has also approved the proposed changes.

The proposal includes changes to (Ex. A):

- Section 202.1 – Application of Part; Waiver; Additional Rules; Application of CPLR; Definitions.
- Section 202.16 – Matrimonial Actions; Calendar Control of Financial Disclosure in Actions and Proceeds Involving Alimony, Maintenance, Child Support and Equitable Distribution; Motions for Alimony, Counsel Fees Pendente Lite, and Child Support; Special Rules
- Section 202.16-b – Submission of Written Applications in Contested Matrimonial Actions.

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¹ Request for Public Comment on Proposal to Amend the Uniform Civil Rules for the Supreme Court and County Court, <https://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/rules/comments/pdf/RPC-Proposed-amendments-to-Uniform-Civil-Rules.pdf>

Persons wishing to comment on the proposal should e-mail their submissions to rulecomments@nycourts.gov or write to: Eileen D. Millett, Esq., Counsel, Office of Court Administration, 25 Beaver Street, 11th Fl., New York, New York, 10004. Comments must be received no later than December 15, 2021.

All public comments will be treated as available for disclosure under the Freedom of Information Law and are subject to publication by the Office of Court Administration. Issuance of a proposal for public comment should not be interpreted as an endorsement of that proposal by the Unified Court System or the Office of Court Administration.

EXHIBIT A



STATE OF NEW YORK
UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM
360 ADAMS STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11201
(347) 296-1527

LAWRENCE K. MARKS
Chief Administrative Judge

JEFFREY S. SUNSHINE
Statewide Coordinating Judge for
Matrimonial Cases

MEMORANDUM

TO: Hon. Lawrence Marks
FROM: Hon. Jeffrey S. Sunshine
DATE: April 23, 2021
RE: Harmonization of 270.20 and 202.16
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At the request of the Administrative Board, Judge Scheinkman and I met with various members of our respective committees separately to discuss the issues raised regarding the effect of the new Supreme Court Rules (270/20) and matrimonial rules (202.16).

Thereafter we both met and exchanged drafts, the result of which is a final proposal for consideration that is acceptable to both Committees. The full Matrimonial Practice Advisory and Rules Committee has also approved the proposal.

My thanks to Justice Scheinkman and the members of his committee as well as the members of the Matrimonial Practice Advisory and Rules Committee.

As always, I am available if there are any questions.

cc:
Hon Alan Scheinkman
Eileen Millet
Nancy Barry
Susan Kaufman

**Proposal for Harmonization of Matrimonial Rules with A/O 270/20
4/21/21**

**(Note: 22NYCRR 202.16-a and 202.18 are not included in this
because they remain unchanged)**

§ 202.1. Application of Part; Waiver; Additional Rules; Application of CPLR; Definitions

(a) Application. This Part shall be applicable to civil actions and proceedings in the Supreme Court and the County Court, including, but not limited to matrimonial actions and proceedings, except as otherwise provided in sections 202.16, 202.16-a, 202.16-b, and 202.18, which sections shall control in the event of conflict.

(b) Waiver. For good cause shown, and in the interests of justice, the court in an action or proceeding may waive compliance with any of these rules other than sections 202.2 and 202.3 unless prohibited from doing so by statute or by a rule of the Chief Judge.

(c) Additional Rules. Local court rules, not inconsistent with law or with these rules, shall comply with Part 9 of the Rules of the Chief Judge (22 NYCRR Part 9).

(d) Application of CPLR. The provisions of this Part shall be construed consistent with the Civil Practice Law and Rules (CPLR), and matters not covered by these provisions shall be governed by the CPLR.

(e) Definitions.

(1) “Chief Administrator of the Courts” in this Part also includes a designee of the Chief Administrator.

(2) The term “clerk” shall mean the chief clerk or other appropriate clerk of the trial court unless the context otherwise requires.

(3) Unless otherwise defined in this Part, or the context otherwise requires, all terms used in this Part shall have the same meaning as they have in the CPLR.

(f) Counsel who appear before the court must be familiar with the case with regard to which they appear and be fully prepared and authorized to discuss and resolve the issues which are scheduled to be the subject of the appearance. Failure to comply with this rule may be treated as a default for purposes of Rule 202.27 and/or may be treated as a failure to appear for purposes of Rule 130.2.1, provided that, in matrimonial actions and proceedings, consistent with applicable case law on defaults in matrimonial actions, failure to comply with this rule may, either in lieu of or in addition to any other direction, be considered in the determination of any award of attorney fees or expenses.

(g) It is important that counsel be on time for all scheduled appearances.

§202.16. Matrimonial Actions; Calendar Control of Financial Disclosure in Actions and Proceedings Involving Alimony, Maintenance, Child Support and Equitable Distribution; Motions for Alimony, Counsel Fees Pendente Lite, and Child Support; Special Rules

(a) Applicability. This section shall be applicable to all contested actions and proceedings in the Supreme Court in which statements of net worth are required by section 236 of the Domestic Relations Law to be filed and in which a judicial determination may be made with respect to alimony, counsel fees pendente lite, maintenance, custody and visitation, child support, or the equitable distribution of property, including those referred to Family Court by the Supreme Court pursuant to section 464 of the Family Court Act.

(b) Form of Statements of Net Worth. Sworn statements of net worth, except as provided in subdivision (k) of this section, exchanged and filed with the court pursuant to section 236 of the Domestic Relations Law, shall be in substantial compliance with the Statement of Net Worth form contained in appendix A of this Part [see Appendix A, following Part 218].

(c) Retainer Agreements.

(1) A signed copy of the attorney's retainer agreement with the client shall accompany the statement of net worth filed with the court, and the court shall examine the agreement to assure that it conforms to Appellate Division attorney conduct and disciplinary rules. Where substitution of counsel occurs after the filing with the court of the net worth statement, a signed copy of the attorney's retainer agreement shall be filed with the court within 10 days of its execution.

(2) An attorney seeking to obtain an interest in any property of his or her client to secure payment of the attorney's fee shall make application to the court for approval of said interest on notice to the client and to his or her adversary. The application may be granted only after the court reviews the finances of the parties and an application for attorney's fees.

(d) Request for Judicial Intervention. A request for judicial intervention shall be filed with the court by the plaintiff no later than 45 days from the date of service of the summons and complaint or summons with notice upon the defendant, unless both parties file a notice of no necessity with the court, in which event the request for judicial intervention may be filed no later than 120 days from the date of service of the summons and complaint or summons with notice upon the defendant. Notwithstanding section 202.6(a) of this Part, the court shall accept a request for judicial intervention that is not accompanied by other papers to be filed in court.

(e) Certification. Every paper served on another party or filed or submitted to the court in a matrimonial action shall be signed as provided in section 130-1.1-a of the Rules of the Chief Administrator.

(f) Preliminary Conference.

(1) In all actions or proceedings to which this section of the rules is applicable, a preliminary conference shall be ordered by the court to be held within 45 days after the action has been assigned. Such order shall set the time and date for the conference and shall specify the papers that shall be exchanged between the parties. These papers must be exchanged no later than 10 days prior to the preliminary conference, unless the court directs otherwise. These papers shall include:

(i) statements of net worth, which also shall be filed with the court no later than 10 days prior to the preliminary conference;

(ii) all paycheck stubs for the current calendar year and the last paycheck stub for the immediately preceding calendar year;

(iii) all filed state and federal income tax returns for the previous three years, including both personal returns and returns filed on behalf of any partnership or closely held corporation of which the party is a partner or shareholder;

(iv) all W-2 wage and tax statements, 1099 forms, and K-1 forms for any year in the past three years in which the party did not file state and federal income tax returns;

(v) all statements of accounts received during the past three years from each financial institution in which the party has maintained any account in which cash or securities are held;

(vi) the statements immediately preceding and following the date of commencement of the matrimonial action pertaining to: (A) any policy of life insurance having a cash or dividend surrender value; and (B) any deferred compensation plan of any type or nature in which the party has an interest including, but not limited to, Individual Retirement Accounts, pensions, profit-sharing plans, Keogh plans, 401(k) plans and other retirement plans.

(1-a) Where both parties are represented by counsel, counsel shall consult with each other prior to the preliminary conference to discuss the matters set forth in paragraph (2) below and in section 202.11 in a good faith effort to reach agreement on such matters. Notwithstanding section 202.11, no prior consultation is required where either or both of the parties is self-represented. Counsel shall, prior to or at the conference, submit to the court a writing with respect to any resolutions reached, which the court shall “so order” if approved and in proper form.

(1-b) Both parties personally must be present in court at the time of the conference, and the judge personally shall address the parties at some time during the conference.

(2) The matters to be considered at the conference may include, among other things:

(i) applications for pendente lite relief, including interim counsel fees;

(ii) compliance with the requirement of compulsory financial disclosure, including the exchange and filing of a supplemental statement of net worth indicating material changes in any previously exchanged and filed statement of net worth and, including the number and length of depositions the number of interrogatories, and any exchange of Electronically Stored Information

(iii) simplification and limitation of the issues;

(iv) the establishment of a timetable for the completion of all disclosure proceedings, provided that all such procedures must be completed and the note of issue filed within six months from the commencement of the conference, unless otherwise shortened or extended by the court depending upon the circumstances of the case;

(v) the completion of a preliminary conference order substantially in the form contained in Appendix “G” to these rules, with attachments; and

(vi) any other matters which the court shall deem appropriate.

(3) At the close of the conference, the court shall direct the parties to stipulate, in writing or on the record, as to all resolved issues, which the court then shall “so order,” and as to all issues with respect to fault, custody and finance that remain unresolved. Any issues with respect to fault, custody and finance that are not specifically described in writing or on the record at that time may not be raised in the action unless good cause is shown. The court shall fix a schedule for discovery as to all unresolved issues and, in a noncomplex case, shall schedule a date for trial not later than six months from the date of the conference. The court may appoint an attorney for the infant children, or may direct the parties to file with the court, within 30 days of the conference, a list of suitable attorneys for children for selection by the court. The court also may direct that a list of expert witnesses be filed with the court within 30 days of the conference from which the court may select a neutral expert to assist the court. The court shall schedule a compliance conference unless the court dispenses with the conference based upon a stipulation of compliance filed by the parties.

(4) Unless the court excuses their presence, the parties personally must be present in court at the time of the compliance conference. If the parties are present in court, the judge personally shall address them at some time during the conference. Where both parties are represented by counsel, counsel shall consult with each other prior to the compliance conference in a good faith effort to resolve any outstanding issues. Notwithstanding section 202.11, no prior consultation is required where either or both of the parties is self-represented. Counsel shall, prior to or at the compliance conference, submit to the court a writing with respect to any resolutions reached, which the court shall “so order” if approved and in proper form.

(5) In accordance with section 202.20-c(f), absent good cause, a party may not use at trial or otherwise any document which was not produced in response to a request for such document or category of document, which request was not objected to, or, if objected to, such objection was overruled by the court, provided, however, the court may exercise its discretion to impose such other, further, or additional penalty for non-disclosure as may be authorized by law and which

may be more appropriate in a matrimonial action than preclusion or where there is a continuing obligation to update (e.g., updated tax returns, W-2 statements, etc.).

(6) The Court shall alert the parties to the requirements of 22 NYCRR §§§ 202.20-c regarding requests for documents; 202.20-e regarding adherence to discovery schedule, and 202.20-f regarding discovery disputes, and shall address the issues of potential for default, preclusion, denial of discovery, drawing inferences, or deeming issues to be true, as well as sanctions and/ or counsel fees in the event default or preclusion or such other remedies are not appropriate in a matrimonial action.

(g) Expert Witnesses.

(1) Responses to demands for expert information pursuant to CPLR § 3101(d) shall be served within 20 days following service of such demands.

(2) Each expert witness whom a party expects to call at the trial shall file with the court a written report, which shall be exchanged and filed with the court no later than 60 days before the date set for trial, and reply reports, if any, shall be exchanged and filed no later than 30 days before such date. Failure to file with the court a report in conformance with these requirements may, in the court's discretion, preclude the use of the expert. Except for good cause shown, the reports exchanged between the parties shall be the only reports admissible at trial. Late retention of experts and consequent late submission of reports shall be permitted only upon a showing of good cause as authorized by CPLR 3101(d)(1)(i). In the discretion of the court, written reports may be used to substitute for direct testimony at the trial, but the reports shall be submitted by the expert under oath, and the expert shall be present and available for cross-examination. In the discretion of the court, in a proper case, parties may be bound by the expert's report in their direct case.

(3) Pursuant to section 202.26, in cases in which both parties are represented by counsel and each party has called, or intends to call, an expert witness on issues of finances (e.g., equitable distribution, maintenance, child support), the court may direct that, prior to, or during trial, counsel consult in good faith to identify those aspects of their respective experts' testimony that are not in dispute. The court may further direct that any agreements reached in this regard shall be reduced to a written stipulation. Such consultation shall not be required where one or both parties is self-represented or where the expert testimony relates to matters of child custody or parental access, domestic violence, domestic abuse, or child neglect or abuse.

(4) The provisions of section 202.20-a shall not apply to matrimonial actions and proceedings unless the court orders otherwise.

(h) Statement of Proposed Disposition.

(1) Each party shall exchange a statement setting forth the following:

(i) the assets claimed to be marital property;

(ii) the assets claimed to be separate property;

- (iii) an allocation of debts or liabilities to specific marital or separate assets, where appropriate;
- (iv) the amount requested for maintenance, indicating and elaborating upon the statutory factors forming the basis for the maintenance requests;
- (v) the proposal for equitable distribution, where appropriate, indicating and elaborating upon the statutory factors forming the basis for the proposed distribution;
- (vi) the proposal for a distributive award, if requested, including a showing of the need for a distributive award;
- (vii) the proposed plan for child support, indicating and elaborating upon the statutory factors upon which the proposal is based; and
- (viii) the proposed plan for custody and visitation of any children involved in the proceeding, setting forth the reasons therefor.

(2) A copy of any written agreement entered into by the parties relating to financial arrangements or custody or visitation shall be annexed to the statement referred to in paragraph (1) of this subdivision.

(3) The statement referred to in paragraph (1) of this subdivision, with proof of service upon the other party, shall, with the note of issue, be filed with the court. The other party, if he or she has not already done so, shall file with the court a statement complying with paragraph (1) of this subdivision within 20 days of such service.

(i) Filing of Note of Issue. No action or proceeding to which this section is applicable shall be deemed ready for trial unless there is compliance with this section by the party filing the note of issue and certificate of readiness.

(j) Referral to Family Court. In all actions or proceedings to which this section is applicable referred to the Family Court by the Supreme Court pursuant to section 464 of the Family Court Act, all statements, including supplemental statements, exchanged and filed by the parties pursuant to this section shall be transmitted to the Family Court with the order of referral.

(k) Motions for Alimony, Maintenance, Counsel Fees Pendente Lite and Child Support (Other Than Under Section 237(c) or Section 238 of the Domestic Relations Law). Unless, on application made to the court, the requirements of this subdivision be waived for good cause shown, or unless otherwise expressly provided by any provision of the CPLR or other statute, the following requirements shall govern motions for alimony, maintenance, counsel fees (other than a motion made pursuant to section 237(c) or section 238 of the Domestic Relations Law for counsel fees for services rendered by an attorney to secure the enforcement of a previously granted order or decree) or child support or any modification of an award thereof:

(1) Such motion shall be made before or at the preliminary conference, if practicable.

(2) No motion shall be heard unless the moving papers include a statement of net worth in the official form prescribed by subdivision (b) of this section.

(3) No motion for counsel fees and expenses shall be heard unless the moving papers also include the affidavit of the movant's attorney stating the moneys, if any, received on account of such attorney's fee from the movant or any other person on behalf of the movant, the hourly amount charged by the attorney, the amounts paid, or to be paid, to counsel and any experts, and any additional costs, disbursements or expenses, and the moneys such attorney has been promised by, or the agreement made with, the movant or other persons on behalf of the movant, concerning or in payment of the fee. Fees and expenses of experts shall include appraisal, accounting, actuarial, investigative and other fees and expenses (including costs for payment of non-party production expenses required to be paid pursuant to 22 NYCRR 202.20-j) and processing of NYSCEF documents because of the inability of a self-represented party that desires to e-file to have computer access or afford internet accessibility) to enable a spouse to carry on or defend a matrimonial action or proceeding in the Supreme Court.

(4) The party opposing any motion shall be deemed to have admitted, for the purpose of the motion but not otherwise, such facts set forth in the moving party's statement of net worth as are not controverted in:

(i) a statement of net worth, in the official form prescribed by this section, completed and sworn to by the opposing party, and made a part of the answering papers, or

(ii) other sworn statements or affidavits with respect to any fact which is not feasible to controvert in the opposing party's statement of net worth.

(5) The failure to comply with the provisions of this subdivision shall be good cause, in the discretion of the judge presiding, either:

(i) to draw an inference favorable to the adverse party with respect to any disputed fact or issue affected by such failure; or

(ii) to deny the motion without prejudice to renewal upon compliance with the provisions of this section.

(6) The notice of motion submitted with any motion for or related to interim maintenance or child support shall contain a notation indicating the nature of the motion. Any such motion shall be determined within 30 days after the motion is submitted for decision.

(7) Upon any application for an award of counsel fees or fees and expenses of experts made prior to the conclusion of the trial of the action, the court shall set forth in specific detail, in writing or on the record, the factors it considered and the reasons for its decision.

(l) Hearings or trials pertaining to temporary or permanent custody or visitation shall proceed from day to day to conclusion. With respect to other issues before the court, to the extent feasible, trial should proceed from day to day to conclusion.

(m) The court may, for good cause, relieve the parties and counsel from the requirements of sections 202.34 and 202.20-h.

(n) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 202.20-i, no party shall be precluded from testifying in person in support or defense of any claim or issue in an action or proceeding subject to this section. In an action for custody, visitation, contempt, order of protection or exclusive occupancy, except as provided in section 202.18, a party or a party's own witness may not testify on direct examination by affidavit.

(o)~~(m)~~ Omission or Redaction of Confidential Personal Information from Matrimonial Decisions.

(1) Except as otherwise provided by rule or law or court order, and whether or not a sealing order is or has been sought, prior to submitting any decision, order, judgment, or combined decision and order or judgment in a matrimonial action for publication, the court shall redact the following confidential personal information:

i. the taxpayer identification number of an individual or an entity, including a social security number, an employer identification number, and an individual taxpayer identification number, except the last four digits thereof;

ii. the actual home address of the parties to the matrimonial action and their children;

iii. the full name of an individual known to be a minor under the age of eighteen (18) years of age, except the minor's initials or the first name of the minor with the first initial of the minor's last name; provided that nothing herein shall prevent the court from granting a request to use only the minor's initials or only the word "Anonymous;"

iv. the date of an individual's birth (including the date of birth of minor children), except the year of birth;

v. the full name of either party where there are allegations of domestic violence, neglect, abuse, juvenile delinquency or mental health issues, except the party's initials or the first name of the party with the first initial of the party's last name; provided that nothing herein shall prevent the court from granting a request to use only the party's initials or only the word "Anonymous;" and

vi. a financial account number, including a credit and/or debit card number, a bank account number, an investment account number, and/or an insurance account number (including a health insurance account number), except the last four digits or letters thereof.

(2) Nothing herein shall require parties to omit or redact personal confidential information as described herein or 22 NYCRR § 202.5(e) in papers submitted to the court for filing.

(3) Nothing herein shall prevent the court from omitting or redacting more personal confidential information than is required by this rule, either upon the request of a party or sua sponte.

Section 202.16-b Submission of Written Applications in Contested Matrimonial Actions.

(1) Applicability. This section shall be applicable to all contested matrimonial actions and proceedings in Supreme Court authorized by subdivision (2) of Part B of section 236 of the Domestic Relations Law.

(2) Unless otherwise expressly provided by any provision of the CPLR or other statute, and in addition to the requirements of 22 NYCRR §202.16 (k) where applicable, the following rules and limitations are required for the submission of papers in all applications (including post judgment applications) for alimony, maintenance, counsel fees, child support, exclusive occupancy, custody and visitation unless said requirements are waived by the judge for good cause shown:

~~{(i)}~~(3) Applications that are deemed an emergency must comply with 22 NYCRR §202.16 (k) 8-e and provide for notice, where applicable, in accordance with same. These emergency applications shall receive a preference by the clerk for processing and the court for signature. Designating an application as an emergency without good cause may be punishable by the issuance of sanctions pursuant to Part 130 of the Rules of the Chief Administrative Judge. Any application designated as an emergency without good cause shall be processed and considered in the ordinary course of local court procedures.

~~{(ii)}~~(4) Where practicable, all orders to show cause, motions or cross-motions for relief should be made in one order to show cause or motion or cross-motion. The utilization of the requirement to move by order to show cause or notice of motion shall be governed by local part rule.

~~{(iii)} All orders to show cause and motions or cross motions shall be submitted on one sided copy except as otherwise provided in 22 NYCRR §202.5(a), or electronically where authorized, with one inch margins on eight and one half by eleven (8.5 x 11) inch paper with all additional exhibits tabbed. They shall be in Times New Roman font 12 and double spaced. They must be of sufficient quality ink to allow for the reading and proper scanning of the documents. Self-represented litigants may submit handwritten applications provided that the handwriting is legible and otherwise in conformity with these rules.~~

~~{(iv)} The supporting affidavit or affidavit in opposition or attorney affirmation in support or opposition or memorandum of law shall not exceed twenty (20) pages. Any expert affidavit required shall not exceed eight (8) additional pages. Any attorney affirmation in support or opposition or memorandum of law shall contain only discussion and argument on issues of law except for facts known only to the attorney. Any reply affidavits or affirmations to the extent permitted shall not exceed ten (10) pages. Sur reply affidavits can only be submitted with prior court permission.~~

(5) Papers and Motions Generally

(i) Papers shall comply with the requirements of section 202.5, except that a party who is self-represented shall be excused from the requirement of section [202.5(c)] 202.5(a)(2) and

except that any party may be excused from the requirement of 202.5(a)(2) if excused by the court.

(ii) Motion papers submitted by a party who is self-represented need not comply with the requirements of sections 202.8-b, provided that: (a) affidavits, affirmations, briefs and memoranda of law in chief shall be limited to 20 pages each; and (b) reply affidavits, affirmations, and memoranda shall be limited to 10 pages each and shall not contain any arguments that do not respond or relate to those made in the memoranda in chief. Self represented parties need certify only that these page limitations and those of section 202.16-b (5) (v) are satisfied. If parties are represented by counsel, counsel must certify that the requirements of section 202.8-b as well as section 202.16-b (5) (v) have been met.

(iii) Notwithstanding section 202.5 -a, papers and correspondence may be transmitted to the court by fax by a self-represented party without prior court approval unless prohibited by a local part rule or judicial order.

(iv) Self-represented litigants may submit handwritten applications provided that the handwriting is legible and otherwise in conformity with these rules

(v) Except for affidavits of net worth (pursuant to 22 NYCRR §202.16 (b)), retainer agreements (pursuant to Rule 1400.3 of the Joint Rules of the Appellate Division), maintenance guidelines worksheets and/or child support worksheets, or counsel fee billing statements or affirmations or affidavits related to counsel fees (pursuant to Domestic Relations Law §237 and 22 NYCRR §202.16(k)), all of which may include attachments thereto, all exhibits annexed to any motion, cross motion, order to show cause, opposition or reply may not be greater than three (3) inches thick without prior permission of the court. All such exhibits must contain exhibit tabs

~~(vi) If the application or responsive papers exceed the page or size limitation provided in this section, counsel or the self-represented litigant must certify in good faith the need to exceed such limitation, and the court may reject or require revision of the application if the court deems the reasons insufficient.~~

[(3)](6) Nothing contained herein shall prevent a judge or justice of the court or of a judicial district within which the court sits from establishing local part rules to the contrary or in addition to these rules.