STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF GENESEE
FAMILY DIVISON

GUIDELINES REGARDING
DOMESTIC CASES

The Family Division Judges provide the following guidelines for parties and counsel as they initiate a domestic case. These guidelines are intended to provide guidance and encourage parties to conduct themselves in such a way as to minimize the negative effects of divorce on themselves and upon the minor children.

1. **RELOCATION OF CHILDREN.** Neither party should remove, cause to be removed, nor permit the removal of any minor children from their current county of residence without the written agreement of both parents or an order of the court.

2. **CHILD SUPPORT.** Child support can be ordered retroactive to the date of filing the petition herein. The parties can agree to maintain the prior financial support for the children during the domestic case or can request a temporary order of child support, if needed. Child support should be in the amount as determined by the Michigan Child Support Formula or an appropriate deviation from the Formula AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER FOR CHILD SUPPORT, PAYMENTS MUST BE MADE TO THE OFFICE OF THE FRIEND OF THE COURT.

3. **TREATMENT OF CHILDREN.** The safety, financial security, and mental wellbeing of minor children are of the utmost concern to the Court. Therefore, parents who are parties to a Family Division case with minor children, either before a final judgment is entered, or where a post judgment petition is filed, will be required to attend the Family Division Orientation and Education Program. The program will inform the parents regarding the role of the Friend of the Court and include helpful assistance in how to co-parent and protect children during a domestic relations case. Parents will receive written notice from the Friend of the Court as to the exact date.

4. **CONDUCT OF THE PARTIES DURING THE CASE.** Both parties are encouraged to refrain from physical, verbal, or any other form of harassment of the other, whether directly or indirectly, including, but not limited to, acts done in person, by telephone, text, social media, or at their residence or place of work. Failure to refrain from this type of conduct may result in the issuance of restraining orders, and if violated, is punishable by incarceration in the county jail.

5. **DISPOSTION OF ASSETS AND CASH.** Neither party should conceal, damage, or dispose of any asset, whether jointly or separately owned or dissipate the value of an asset (for example, by adding a mortgage to real estate) except by written consent of the parties or an order of the court. The parties may spend their income in the ordinary course of their personal and family affairs. Neither party should conceal, hoard, nor waste jointly owned funds, whether in the form of cash, bank accounts, or other highly liquid assets, except said funds can be spent for the necessities of life. Any party not conducting themselves in conformity with this guideline may be required to render an accounting and their conduct viewed as

wasting a marital asset.

6. **VERIFIED PERSONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT.** Every party filing a new divorce with, or without children, must provide the other party and the Friend of the Court, with a verified personal financial statement within 21 days after Defendant files the first responsive pleading or appearance. This statement is not required if Defendant files nothing with the County Clerk. This statement is not in place of other discovery and providing this statement does not limit other discovery permitted by law. Do not file this statement with the County Clerk. The form that must be followed for this statement is available at the County Clerk, at the Friend of the Court, or online.

7. **PERSONAL AND BUSINESS RECORDS/INSURANCE.** Neither party should directly or indirectly conceal from the other party or destroy any records, including, but not limited to, family records, business records, or any records of income, debt, or other obligations. Any insurance policies in effect at the time the petition herein was filed should not be terminated, allowed to lapse, concealed, modified, borrowed against, pledged or otherwise encumbered by either of the parties or at the direction of either party. All insurance policies of every kind should remain the same without any change in terms or beneficiaries. All policy premiums should continue to be paid in full on a timely basis, unless there is a written consent by both parties or an order of the court.

8. **ADDITIONAL DEBT.** Neither party should incur additional personal debt, which would bind the other spouse nor tie up assets, except by the written consent of the parties or order of this court. The parties are strongly urged to temporarily refrain from using joint credit cards except for absolute necessities and only as a last resort. Abuse of credit, especially the other spouse's credit, is often viewed as offensive to the court's sense of equity and will be accordingly considered.

9. **SANCTIONS.** In any case where a party fails without good cause to satisfactorily comply with the rules pertaining to the production of financial records and other documents or fails without good cause to answer interrogatories or attend a deposition, the court will sanction the violator with an appropriate award of attorney fees (or a fine of an equal amount if the spouse seeking compliance has no attorney).

10. **EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION.** Within 14 days of the filing of an answer to the complaint or other responsive pleadings, the parties should exchange the following:
    a. Complete federal and state tax returns for the most recent two (2) years filed, including W2 forms, if applicable.
    b. A verified statement of earnings year-to-date and/or a copy of the party's most recent paystubs, if applicable.
    c. A statement of proposed custodial/parenting time arrangement for the children, if applicable.
    d. A written request for additional information needed for final resolution of this matter.

11. **RETIREMENT OF A PARTY.** If during the pendency of a divorce and/or separate maintenance case, a party is going to retire, the party and/or their counsel have an affirmative duty to notify the other party and/or their counsel immediately prior to the event. If a party retires between the time a settlement is placed on the record and the Judgment is entered, the issues of property and spousal support may be reopened upon proper petition.

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned attorney, certify that the following GUIDELINES REGARDING DOMESTIC CASES is identical in all respects to that prepared by the court and on file in the Office of the Genesee County Clerk, except the addition of information in the heading. I also certify that I have served a copy of said "GUIDELINES REGARDING DOMESTIC CASES" on my client and have fully explained same to my client.

Attorney for Plaintiff P- Date

Address Telephone

Judge Anthony J. McDowell P-74442
Presiding Judge, Family Division

2/6/26
Date

Judge Mary A. Hood P-44618
Family Division

2-6-26
Date

Judge Dawn M. Weier P-61133
Family Division

2-6-2026
Date