

SC ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR NO. 92-2019, June 17, 2019

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TO : ALL OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE SUPREME COURT, COURT OF APPEALS, SANDIGANBAYAN, COURT OF TAX APPEALS AND LOWER COURTS

SUBJECT : PROHIBITION OF THE PREMATURE DISCLOSURE ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES, WEB PUBLISHING TOOLS, INTERNET FORUMS, INSTANT MESSAGING APPLICATIONS, SHORT MESSAGING SERVICES (SMS) AND SIMILAR MEANS OF DECISIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND ALL OTHER PRONOUNCEMENTS FROM THE JUDICIARY THAT HAVE NOT YET BEEN PROMULGATED OR OFFICIALLY RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC

WHEREAS, the Office of the Chief Justice has received reports that there have been court officials and employees who have had access to draft, or signed final decisions, resolutions, orders or pronouncements from the Supreme Court, appellate courts and trial courts by reason of the nature of their work, or by coincidence, and have either deliberately or inadvertently disclosed the foregoing to the public prior to their official promulgation by posting images of, quoting, paraphrasing, or making comments on social media, web publishing tools (i.e., blogs) internet forums, instant messaging applications (whether group or private chat), and other electronic or conventional means;

WHEREAS, all decisions, resolutions, orders or pronouncements from the Supreme Court, appellate courts and trial courts, regardless of the fact that they have already been signed by the corresponding justice(s), judge and/or officials concerned, are considered confidential, and are not to be disclosed to the public until the date stated in the order directing their promulgation issued by the justice(s) or judge of the issuing court, as the case may be, or otherwise made public in accord with the standard practice of the office concerned;

WHEREAS, Cannon II of A.M. No. 03-06- 13-SC otherwise known as the Code of Conduct for Court Personnel provides:

Section 1. Court personnel shall not disclose to any unauthorized person any confidential information acquired by them while employed in the Judiciary, whether such information came from authorized or unauthorized sources.

Confidential information means information not yet made a matter of public record relating to pending cases, as well as information not yet made public concerning the work of any justice or judge relating to pending cases

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Section 2. Confidential information available to specific individuals by reason of statute, court rule or administrative policy shall be disclosed only by persons authorized to do so.

NOW THEREFORE, all court officials and employees are hereby REMINDED to exercise prudence and restraint in the use of social media, the internet, messaging services as well as conventional methods of sharing information in so far as confidential material involving the courts are concerned. All those found in violation of

this Circular shall, in addition to possible indirect contempt of court, shall be subject to the appropriate penalties provided for under existing administrative rules and regulations.

For strict compliance.

June 17, 2019

(SGD.) LUCAS P. BERSAMIN

Chief Justice

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