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July 17, 2020

This letter is being sent to all judicial officers to inform them of Texas Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion ("EAO") No. 550.

In EAO 550, attached, the Commission concluded that public officials may not "use government resources, such as the public officer's office, to create a photograph, video, or other communication for political advertising." Tex. Ethics Comm'n Op. No. 550 (2019) (interpreting both Section 39.02(a) of the Penal Code and Section 255.003(a) of the Election Code). EAO 550 was first adopted by the Commission on June 28, 2019, but it was amended effective June 1, 2020, to remove the exclusion of judicial officers from its application. It is therefore important to consider how the opinion applies to the use of your chambers, courtroom, and bench in political advertising.

Should you have any questions regarding EAO 550, you may contact the Commission's legal staff via email: reception@ethics.state.tx.us or phone: 512-463-5800.

Sincerely,

/s/ J.R. Johnson

J.R. Johnson
General Counsel

Enclosure: EAO-550