PRACTICE OF LAW BY CORPORATIONS AND VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS
Act 354 of 1917

AN ACT to prohibit the practice of law by corporations and voluntary associations and to provide penalties for violations.

History: 1917, Act 354, Eff. Aug. 10, 1917.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

450.681 Practice of law by corporations and voluntary associations prohibited; exceptions; penalty.

Sec. 1. It shall be unlawful for any corporation or voluntary association to practice or appear as an attorney-at-law for any person other than itself in any court in this state or before any judicial body, or to make it a business to practice as an attorney-at-law, for any person other than itself, in any of said courts or to hold itself out to the public as being entitled to practice law, or render or furnish legal services or advice, or to furnish attorneys or counsel or to render legal services of any kind in actions or proceedings of any nature or in any other way or manner, or in any other manner to assume to be entitled to practice law or to assume, use or advertise the title of lawyer or attorney, attorney-at-law, or equivalent terms in any language in such manner as to convey the impression that it is entitled to practice law, or to furnish legal advice, services or counsel, or to advertise that either alone or together with or by or through any person whether a duly and regularly admitted attorney-at-law, or not, it has, owns, conducts or maintains a law office or an office for the practice of law, or for furnishing legal advice, services or counsel. It shall be unlawful further for any corporation or voluntary association to solicit itself or by or through its officers, agents or employes any claim or demand for the purpose of bringing an action thereon or of representing as attorney-at-law, or for furnishing legal advice, services or counsel to a person sued or about to be sued in any action or proceeding or against whom an action or proceeding has been or is about to be brought, or who may be affected by any action or proceeding which has been or may be instituted in any court or before any judicial body, or for the purpose of so representing any person in the pursuit of any civil remedy. Any corporation or voluntary association violating the provisions of this section, and every officer, trustee, director, agent or employe of such corporation or voluntary association who directly or indirectly engages in any of the acts herein prohibited or assists such corporation or voluntary association to do such prohibited acts shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punished by a fine of not to exceed 1,000 dollars or by imprisonment for a period of not to exceed 6 months, or by both such fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court. The fact that such officer, trustee, director, agent or employe shall be a duly and regularly admitted attorney-at-law shall not be held to permit or allow any such corporation or voluntary association to do the acts prohibited herein nor shall such fact be a defense upon the trial of any of the persons mentioned herein for a violation of the provisions of this section. This section shall not apply to any corporation or voluntary association lawfully engaged in a business authorized by the provisions of any existing statute, nor to a corporation or voluntary association lawfully engaged in the examination and insuring of titles of real property, nor shall it prohibit a corporation or voluntary association from employing an attorney or attorneys in and about its own immediate affairs or in any litigation to which it is or may be a party, or from employing an attorney or attorneys to render legal aid without charge to any employes of such corporation or voluntary association, nor shall it apply to organizations organized for benevolent or charitable purposes, or for the purpose of assisting persons without means in the pursuit of any civil remedy, whose existence, organization or incorporation may be approved by the circuit court of the circuit in which the principal office of said corporation or voluntary association may be located. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent a corporation from furnishing to any person, lawfully engaged in the practice of the law, such information or such clerical services in and about his professional work as, except for the provisions of this act, may be lawful: Provided, That at all times the lawyer receiving such information or such services shall maintain full professional and direct responsibility to his clients for the information and services so received. But no corporation shall be permitted to render any services which cannot lawfully be rendered by a person not admitted to practice law in this state nor to solicit directly or indirectly professional employment for a lawyer.

History: 1917, Act 354, Eff. Aug. 10, 1917;—CL 1929, 10175;—CL 1948, 450.681.

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