

The Board of Rochester NLG adopted the following statement in opposition to the NYC amendment and in support of the change in the definition in legal worker.

"Legal workers, including volunteer legal workers, have been the backbone of the Rochester Chapter and many of our strongest legal observers. Without our legal worker members, we would not now and would never have had a functioning chapter prepared to stand in solidarity with local movements and activists. Many of our legal worker members became legal workers by virtue of becoming trained and trusted legal observers; some are now well on their way to being radical lawyers, many remain active and integral members of our chapter. When we vet and screen our potential LOs, we do not do so by considering whether they work as, for, or with lawyers. Not only is that insufficient indicia of trustworthiness, it has, in our experience, borne little relationship to competence on the ground. We want to know, to the extent it is ever possible to know, that the people we send out in the streets know how to act in solidarity and with humility, and are neither cops nor fascists. Nothing about working in a law office answers either question.

If the National Lawyers Guild is to be truly inclusive and function in real solidarity with activists, it should not simply be a place where leftist lawyers gather. The board of the Rochester Chapter fully supports the proposal to expand the definition of legal worker, and opposes any amendment that creates space for needless gatekeeping tactics."