

To: The Supreme Court of the State of Washington
Re: Adoption of the Proposed Legal Technician Rule

I am writing in support of the proposed Legal Technician Rule as written and submitted by the Practice of Law Board. Upon adoption of the Rule, trained Legal Technicians would help to relieve the crushing burdens experienced by the working poor when faced with the relatively high costs of much needed legal services. Currently, there exist legal service alternatives of questionable merit that I suspect prey upon the unmet legal needs of the poor. For instance, Internet legal services providers advertise on steady rotation on local talk radio stations. Also, Craig's List features unmonitored ads by anonymous posters holding themselves out as paralegals and legal assistants to "help" with pro se divorce. If attorneys are hoping to protect their economic turf while maintaining legal standards by opposing this rule, it seems the "barn door" is being "closed" a bit late.

Moreover, the Washington State legal profession could greatly benefit from a healthy dose of competition. If the comments section is any indication, the submissions by paralegals (and those attorneys in support of them) seem far more articulate and informed than those made by lawyers opposed to the rule. Attorneys standing in opposition offer little more than bombastic rhetoric that is appallingly devoid of material substance pertaining to the issue at hand. Clearly, the nature of those arguments belies the fact that most of these lawyers have never bothered to read the very proposal they feel fit to comment upon.

Anyone with a basic grasp of economics, anyone that has so much as taken an Econ 101 course, understands that *demand* isn't just based upon the *willingness* to pay - but the *ability* to pay as well. The POLB that the Washington State Supreme Court commissioned to look into this very issue has meticulously researched, documented, and *demonstrated* the *need* for affordable legal services in key limited areas for those with the willingness, but not the ability, to pay for an attorney. Those limited practice areas covered by the proposed Legal Technician rule are structured in such a way that clients that do not have the ability to pay for regular attorney fees could turn to the assistance of a Legal Technician. In addition, since attorneys are seeking to attract *paying* clients, the Legal Technician rule should in no way negatively impact *any* attorney's financial interests.

Some negative commentators have expressed concerns over the quality of training and services that Legal Technicians might provide. Given the rigorous training standards, the limited scope of practice, the numerous safeguard provisions and the explicit bond requirements embodied in the POLB's proposed Legal Technician rule, these concerns seem to be either misguided or disingenuous.

In closing, adoption of the Legal Technician Rule as proposed by the Practice of Law Board will provide trained, qualified and *licensed* Paralegals to meet the legitimate legal needs of the working poor. In doing so, it will help bring renewed confidence in the eyes of the general public toward viewing the legal profession and its values as a whole.

Yours Truly,

Brian E. Hobi