



## Northwest Justice Project

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César E. Torres  
Executive Director

April 26, 2017

Clerk of the Supreme Court  
Temple of Justice  
P.O. Box 40929  
Olympia, W A 98504-0929

Re: CR 23 - Proposed Amendment

Honorable Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court:

The Northwest Justice Project (NJP) strongly supports the proposed change to CR 23 to increase the percentage of class action residuals directed for civil legal aid from 25% to 50%.

As the largest provider of civil legal aid services in Washington, NJP offers a full range of services from free information and do-it-yourself resources, to statewide toll-free telephonic advice, limited assistance and referral, to representation in trial and appellate courts through 18 staffed field offices. Despite this broad range of services, every day our staff is made acutely aware of the depth of unmet need for civil legal aid services across the state.

This reality was documented in the 2015 Civil Legal Needs Study Update which made clear that the great majority of low income households experience significant civil legal problems each year and less than a quarter of these households are able to access civil legal aid services of any kind. At the same time, the beneficial impact of access to our justice system both for the families involved and for the greater community is clear.

Access to civil legal aid services assists courts and judges in reaching correct results, while affirming our national principles and promoting human dignity and respect. With access to civil legal aid services, low-income families can ensure laws are given effect, protect their rights, and address fundamental human needs, secure family safety, access or preserve medical care, protect economic security, and overcome barriers to employment and opportunity.

Amending CR 23 as proposed will double the residual funds made available to the Legal Foundation of Washington (LFW) to support increased access to civil legal aid for low-income communities across the Washington state. Although the amount of available funding varies from year to year, residual funds received by LFW have provided critical client service capacity to

serve discrete communities and also provide much needed additional support to improve client services throughout the legal aid delivery system.

For all of the above reasons, NJP urges the Court to approve the amendment as proposed. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Torres', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

César E. Torres  
Executive Director

c. [supreme@courts.wa.gov](mailto:supreme@courts.wa.gov)

## Tracy, Mary

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**From:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 26, 2017 12:27 PM  
**To:** Tracy, Mary  
**Subject:** FW: CR 23 - Proposed Amendment - Comments  
**Attachments:** CR 23 Amendment-NJP Comments.pdf

Forwarding.

**From:** César Torres [mailto:Cesart@nwjustice.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 26, 2017 12:24 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** CR 23 - Proposed Amendment - Comments

Dear Ms. Carlson – Attached please find an electronic copy of the Northwest Justice Project’s comments on the proposed amendment to CR 23. The original is being mailed today.

Please let me know if you have any questions or require any additional information. Thank you.

César E. Torres  
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Northwest Justice Project

***Securing Justice: Transforming Lives***