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To: [Tracy, Mary](#)
Subject: FW: Please Support WDA Rule Proposal
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2020 12:26:05 PM

From: Aneelah Afzali [mailto:aneelah.afzali@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2020 12:24 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Please Support WDA Rule Proposal

Dear Justices:

My name is Aneelah Afzali and I live in Seattle. As an attorney and an individual, I believe that low-income people throughout Washington deserve the right to defend themselves when they are accused of a crime. Attending court can, and often is, a significant burden on people with limited resources to support themselves and their families. Attending court hearings requires time off work (if they can get it without jeopardizing their job), arranging for child care, finding transportation -- all things that cost time and money and exacerbate often precarious financial circumstances.

People should not have to choose between being responsible to their work and their families, answering criminal charges and defending their rights. The convictions that can result from failing to appear at court hearings have devastating consequences such as job loss, increased financial hardship and deportation.

In light of this, I ask that you adopt the changes to the rules requiring people to attend court hearings that the Washington Defender Association has proposed. These changes would be a significant and much-needed step that will help so many people by ensuring they do not have to face these choices and suffer the consequences of having to attend, or being unable to attend, procedural or administrative court hearings that can be handled by their attorneys. I believe this is a just solution to an on-going problem that helps people without compromising the ability of the courts to see that justice is done.

I look forward to your positive response to this proposal. Thank you.

Kindest regards,

Aneelah Afzali, WSBA #34552
Executive Director, American Muslim Empowerment Network
(A program of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound)
