

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Tracy, Mary](#)
Subject: FW: Pro Bono Council support for proposed General Rule 38
Date: Monday, February 3, 2020 3:58:05 PM

From: Catherine Brown [mailto:CatherineB@kcba.org]
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2020 3:34 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Cc: Elizabeth Fitzgerald (elizabethf@ccvlp.org) <elizabethf@ccvlp.org>; Eloise Barshes - Chelan-Douglas County Volunteer Attorney Services (director@cdcvas.org) <director@cdcvas.org>
Subject: Pro Bono Council support for proposed General Rule 38

To Whom it May Concern:

The Pro Bono Council (PBC) is a convening body to represent and advocate for the network of 16 volunteer lawyer programs (VLPs) in Washington. VLPs provide free, high quality, efficient, and innovative civil legal assistance to low-income people through recruitment, training, supervision, and support of volunteer lawyers. Each VLP is affiliated with a county bar association(s) and is governed by a board of directors or steering committee comprised of local attorneys and other community members. Each VLP coordinates local attorneys and other volunteers to provide pro bono help at legal clinics and other service delivery models.

The PBC supports the adoption of General Rule (GR) 38, which will protect the rights of immigrants in our state. GR 38 is critical to ensuring courthouses are trusted public forums that are accessible to everyone, regardless of nationality or citizenship status. Warrantless immigration arrests are causing community members to choose between going to court and being deported. Furthermore, immigration enforcement activity at courthouses and warrantless arrests in and near Washington courts has a chilling effect on immigrants and their families and undermines public confidence in the courts.

To provide low-barrier legal help for litigants, VLPs often hold legal clinics inside local courthouses, particularly for legal matters that require personal appearance for litigation. If courts are viewed as staging grounds for immigration arrests, people will avoid going to court out of fear. In many cases, individuals' efforts to avoid courthouses also impede their opportunity for courthouse-based pro bono civil legal assistance. **Individuals should not be forced to choose between deportation and securing legal help to protect basic human needs such as being free from abuse and maintaining safe and stable housing.**

The PBC urges members of the Washington State Supreme Court to protect

Washington courthouses as trusted public spaces where all community members can participate in court cases, vindicate their rights, and take legal steps to keep themselves and their families safe and healthy.

Please contact Pro Bono Council Manager, Catherine Brown (catherineb@kcba.org or 206-267-7026) should you require additional information from the PBC. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Catherine Brown
Pro Bono Council Manager
(206) 267-7026
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