

Date: January 13, 2020  
To: Washington State Supreme Court  
From: Irene Schomus Morrow  
Re: DHS courthouse arrests/Adoption of General Rule 38

I am writing this in support of the adoption of General Rule 38 which protects the rights of immigrants in our state. I have been involved in accompanying immigrants to court in Ephrata and Othello, WA in order to help prevent a courthouse arrest while they are attempting to obey the law by appearing in court. Most of the people I accompanied were trying to follow up on a traffic citation. They had jobs and families in the community yet they were in fear of being taken away as they sought to rectify a legal situation.

I personally experienced how the trauma of forcible disappearances at our local courts causes fear, anxiety and general mistrust of law enforcement in the local community.

In one situation we planned to accompany a woman for a traffic citation but received word that ICE was active in the courthouse before we arrived. We knew that if this woman did go to her court hearing she would most likely be arrested by ICE. She decided not to go to court and resolve her traffic citation rather than risk a non-judicial arrest and possible deportation. The presence of ICE in the courthouse prevented someone from accessing the courts and caused fear and mistrust of the judicial system.

Outside of the Ephrata courthouse I witnessed the emotional trauma of a man being surprised by ICE/CBP agents as he left the courthouse with his mother. He was surrounded by 5 guys in plainclothes and without judicial warrant, he was whisked away into an unmarked SUV. Frankly, it resembled what we hear happens when a drug cartel kidnaps someone. His elderly mother was left alone without explanation in front of the courthouse and although she was given his car keys, she was unable to drive. Fortunately we were able to provide the basic humanitarian assistance of helping her contact his wife and family and provide resources for how to determine where he was taken. I spent the rest of the afternoon helping them process the trauma of having the family's provider suddenly disappeared.

The repercussions of ICE arrests in local communities are huge. Family and friends of community members targeted by ICE lose their trust in law enforcement, replaced by a fear of anyone in authority. Crimes are not reported due to fear.

The right to access courts is a fundamental right, and one that protects and ensures other core constitutional rights like due process and equal protection of the law. But courts can't operate fairly or effectively when people don't feel safe coming forward. The impact of immigration enforcement at courthouses greatly undermines public safety and the fundamental right to equal protection under the law that is shared by noncitizens and citizens alike.

I urge you to adopt this ruling.

Sincerely,  
Irene Schomus Morrow  
igsorrow@gmail.com  
Wenatchee for Immigrant Justice  
Wenatchee, Washington

**From:** [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)  
**To:** [Tracy, Mary](#)  
**Subject:** FW: General Rule 38  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 14, 2020 8:41:01 AM  
**Attachments:** [Adoption of General Rule 38 .docx](#)

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**From:** Irene Morrow [mailto:igsmorrow@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 13, 2020 9:43 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** General Rule 38

I have attached my comments regarding this rule

Sincerely,  
Irene Morrow