

Tracy, Mary

From: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2019 2:58 PM
To: Tracy, Mary
Subject: FW: Proposed Court Rule Changes

From: Ross, Wendy [mailto:Wendy.Ross@kingcounty.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2019 2:55 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Cc: Ross, Wendy <Wendy.Ross@kingcounty.gov>
Subject: Proposed Court Rule Changes

To Whom It May Concern,

I supervise the criminal advocates in the Domestic Violence Unit. I would like to express my concerns related to proposed CrR 4.1. My concerns also relate to proposed CrR 4.7.

The domestic violence victims who work with our office are typically living in highly controlled environments where making decisions for themselves is often not allowed. These victims are also living in fear of their offenders and are afraid to do anything that will cause their abuser to be angry. Victims are reluctant to engage with the criminal justice system because they are unable to control what information is shared with their offenders and the retaliation can lead to violence and even homicide. Victims do not enjoy any confidentiality related to what happens in the criminal justice system and one of the very few things they are able to control is whether or not their interview is recorded or not. It should be mentioned that most victims do agree to be audiotaped but occasionally they do not feel safe to do so. If victims are advised that these recordings are going to be given directly to their abusers it would likely cause us to experience even more recantations to preserve their safety.

Despite the Crime Victim Bill of Rights (RCW 769.030), victims enjoy very few protections within the criminal justice system. Eliminating their ability to choose how their voice is heard in regards to the defense interview could have a chilling effect on victim's willingness to engage with the system in the future and/or to participate in the process as the case moves through the trial process. These rule changes would eliminate the criminal justice system as a safety tool for many victims and put more people in danger of future violence.

Thank you for considering my voice regarding these proposed court rule changes.

Wendy Ross
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