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Washington State
Supreme Court

January 15, 2019

Clerk of the Supreme Court
P.O. Box 40929
Olympia, WA 98504-0929

PETERSON
WAMPOLD
ROSATO
FELDMAN
LUNA

To whom it may concern:

The undersigned wish to express their support for the proposed Revision to APR 3, concerning applicants for admission to practice law. One of the undersigned, Stephanie Messplay, is a military spouse, currently married to a reservist for the United States Navy. While on active duty, Ms. Messplay's husband was an officer stationed at Naval Base Kitsap. Lt. Messplay's decision to move from active duty to reserve status was driven primarily by the difficulties Ms. Messplay would have had to face in continuing her career as an attorney.

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Members of the military are subject to PCS (forced moves) roughly every 1-3 years, which can occur at any time during their term of service. These servicemembers have no say in where they are relocated. For military spouses who have chosen to practice law, this means that they may be relocated to another state where they do not meet the reciprocity requirements. This does not simply translate to taking the bar exam every 1-3 years, as stressful and expensive as that may be. The bar exam is offered only twice per year; a PCS at the wrong time of year could delay admission to the new state of residence by six months or more. This can be devastating to an attorney's career, especially for litigators like the undersigned.

It is fortunate that Washington now accepts UBE scores for purposes of admission; however, many military spouses are not likely to have taken the UBE. This is especially true for Navy spouses, as many states with large naval bases – California, Hawaii, Virginia, Georgia – do not administer the UBE. Naval Base Kitsap is the third largest Navy base in the country and is not even the only Navy base in Washington. Washington is also home to multiple Air Force bases, Army bases, and Coast Guard stations. The many attorneys whose spouses are stationed here should not have to choose between their career and their families.

We encourage the Washington Supreme Court to adopt the proposed rule revisions. Our servicemembers sacrifice a great deal for their country. Their spouses should not have to sacrifice their careers as well.

PWRFL

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Very truly yours,

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