

**From:** [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)  
**To:** [Tracy, Mary](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for proposed change to CrR 3.4 and CrRLJ 3.4  
**Date:** Thursday, April 30, 2020 3:00:27 PM

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**From:** Jim Bloss [mailto:jbloss132@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 30, 2020 2:58 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** Support for proposed change to CrR 3.4 and CrRLJ 3.4

Your Honors:

My name is Jim Bloss and I'm the father of a 42-year-old son living with severe mental illness. I'm writing to you in support of the proposed change to CrR 3.4 and CrRLJ 3.4, re allowing defendants to appear in court through their attorneys for some of the hearings they are currently required to attend in person. Given I'm only allowed 1,500 words in my written statement I am volunteering to "stand tall" in your Courtroom and give verbal testimony in this regard, should you so allow. The written word cannot even come near describing the incredible mental and emotional price that my son and others living with severe mental illness and related disabilities have to pay when subjected to a court experience.

I've seen some of the other statements re this proposed change that are being presented to the Court by Prosecutors and I can only tell you that their beliefs about the need for court appearances by this population show a lack of knowledge about what the Prosecutors believe are the positive benefits of these appearances, certainly the human, psychological and emotional negatives that truly obtain under these circumstances. I'm not a mental or behavioral health

professional but any clinical psychologist and/or psychiatrist will tell you the terrible consequences of a courtroom experience on this population; this experience and this population not cut much slack by our current justice system in Washington State which allows a broad range, depth and breadth, of prosecutorial discretion and little recognition by the Courts of the impacts on behavior due to mental illness and/or chemical dependency.

Our story: My son, Frank had not been taking his medications (he believes they are poison) and ended up incurring a traffic violation resulting in a police chase which resulted in felony charges and (Superior) Court appearances: six appearances in court due to various delays, most of them having to do with court processes and availabilities of court officials. Each of these appearances of course mandated attendance by my son, with the possibility of a court order/warrant being issued for non-appearance. My wife and I had to work very hard for each one of these appearances to ensure that our son would actually "show" for these court appearances: each one of them involving great stress, anxiety and very likely triggering his mental need for "cutting and running". The argument by a Prosecutor about defendants not taking their situation seriously if they don't show for every hearing flies against the reality of the instinctive "fly or fight" emotion that is naturally occurring with this population. Consequences (warrants, etc.) do "not" mean anything to someone who is severely mentally ill. The hammer/stick approach that is the standard in these instances does nothing positive in the way of "teaching" a defendant "not to do something like this again". Indeed, one might argue that our

justice system does not recognize the basic human right of the need for survival which is activated under these circumstances for this population and which the defendant has to overcome in order to make court appearances. I have been amazed at the force of will that my son had during these experiences to show up at court. His actions have led me to see him as "my hero" for what he had to endure, not just for appearing for each hearing but eventually showing up for a full-up jury trial which he somehow found the will to suffer through.

Please, your Honors, please support these changes as presented. Thank you on behalf of Frank and the many others like him who will benefit.

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