

**From:** [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)  
**To:** [Tracy, Mary](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Public Comment on Court rule – GENERAL RULE 38  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 21, 2020 8:10:07 AM

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**From:** Melinda Mueller [mailto:mmueller@seattleacademy.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 20, 2020 10:46 AM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** Public Comment on Court rule – GENERAL RULE 38

My name is Melinda Mueller, and I am a Seattle resident. I support the adoption of General Rule 38, which will protect the rights of immigrants in our state. This matters to me because:

- I am a school teacher. Some of my colleagues, students, and their families are immigrants. I see first-hand the anxieties these families experience in the current climate of increased deportations and detentions.
- No one should have to fear that if they seek justice in our courts, they risk deportation. ICE/CBP's 200+ warrantless civil arrests are hindering access to justice for noncitizens and their families. The presence of immigration officers and increased immigration arrests around courthouses creates a chilling effect that has stopped many from coming to court to face charges, appear as witnesses, or even to pay fees and fines.
- The First and Fifth Amendments protect access to the courts. This is a fundamental right that ensures other core constitutional rights like due process and equal protection of the law. Courts can't operate fairly or effectively when people don't feel safe coming forward.
- The impact of immigration enforcement at courthouses undermines public safety for the entire community, by making it less likely that our immigrant community members will come forward as witnesses or otherwise engage with the justice system.

Similar court rules are in effect in Oregon and New York, and legislation prohibiting warrantless civil arrests in courthouses was recently passed in California. Washington State should join our neighbors in protecting the rights of immigrant families and greater public safety of all our communities.

Sincerely,  
Melinda Mueller  
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Seattle, WA 98117