

Thurston County Volunteer Legal Services

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www.tcvls.org



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APR 19 2021

April 12, 2021

Washington State Supreme Court Clerk
P.O. Box 40929
Olympia, WA 98504-0929

Washington State
Supreme Court

RE: *Support of the Pro Bono Council's suggested amendments to Rule of Professional Conduct 6.5*

To the Honorable Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court:

On behalf of Thurston County Volunteer Legal Services (TCVLS), we wish to convey our support for the adoption of suggested amendments to Rule of Professional Conduct (RPC) 6.5, as proposed by the Pro Bono Council (PBC).

TCVLS is private, non-profit organization that coordinates volunteer attorneys to provide pro bono advice and representation to low-income clients. We provide services to clients in Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor, Lewis, and Pacific Counties for clients with legal issues involving family law (including domestic violence), housing, wills and estates, consumer debt, and employment. The majority of our services are provided through legal advice clinics. Clients meet with volunteer attorneys for 30-45 minutes, receiving advice and brief services, which enables them to better represent themselves *pro se*.

As a limited legal service provider, TCVLS relies on RPC 6.5 to reduce barriers to access and ensure our legal advice clinics are available for low-income individuals and families in need. The PBC's proposed amendments would resolve a serious challenge that our program faces when providing services to survivors of domestic violence in cases where the opposing party received services from a different volunteer attorney through our program. The proposed amendments would ensure that TCVLS is able to provide information about how confidential information will be protected in the event of a conflict, while also ensuring that the safety of domestic violence survivors would not be placed in greater jeopardy through a notice of conflict that may allow the opposing party to deduce that the survivor has sought legal services. The proposed amendments would ensure that the objectives of RPC 6.5 (increased access to legal services and clients being informed about the



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procedures used to protect their confidential information in the event of a conflict) are achieved, while protecting client safety and confidentiality.

Sincerely,



Terry Church, WSBA #20256
Board President



Rachael Langen Lundmark
Executive Director



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for Equal Justice

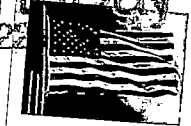
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Earth Day
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