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From: Olivia Irwin [mailto:atty@irwinfirm.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 11:28 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: NO on GR40 IDRT

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As an attorney who regularly assists those in poverty with family law matters I ask that you not implement a state-wide rule for a separate Informal Domestic Relations Trial process. While I agree that there is and has always been a crisis in this area of law, I would rather see an informal (and streamlined) process for all civil cases than further fracturing the courts essential functions, which tends to diminish consistency and accountability in the system as a whole.

Please note that any new/additional set of rules further complicates the process for attorneys and pro se litigants alike by providing an additional set of rules and procedures and does not solve the problem of access to justice by pro se litigants who are often functionally illiterate in the first place.

Another thing to consider is that the more informal the process often the less legally correct/lawful and may give rise to brand new legal issues, as many such programs already do.

In this instance, implementation of a new procedure is not necessary. There are already Family Law Court Facilitators and provisions for mandatory and optional mediation which can be adjusted to take any form--and in fact they should be---because mediator qualification rules (and funding) at this point are narrow and circular, and limit the practitioner/procedural options. I would be in favor of that kind of reform.

Respectfully,
C. Olivia Irwin, J.D.