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Subject: FW: Comment on Proposed General Rule 40 - IDRT
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From: Ruth Gordon [mailto:RGordon@co.jefferson.wa.us]
Sent: Wednesday, June 2, 2021 1:54 PM
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Greetings to the Court,

I strongly favor the proposed rule GR40, because as a clerk I have watched many a *pro se* couple struggle through a bench trial with no idea how to follow the rules of evidence, and indeed, not having any general knowledge of the necessary protocol of a trial. This rule should expedite the process to everyone's benefit and directly assist judicial officers in eliciting the information needed to make a well-grounded decision in the matter before the court.

But, as a clerk, I am concerned about the modifier "any" in subsection (g) on exhibits. Many courts have local court rules regarding exhibits that protect staff safety and take into account reasonable storage limits, and to my mind, the reference to "any exhibits offered" may put those prudent local rules in conflict with the new state rule.

I ask that you consider simply cutting the word "any" in the following subsection, or alternately suggest that you add something like the underlined language below.

(g) The Court will receive any exhibits offered by the parties in compliance with local court rules governing exhibits. The Court will determine what weight, if any, to give each exhibit. The Court may order the record to be supplemented.

Thank you for your consideration. I really do know clerks who have had to store cars, couches and garbage cans in their exhibit storage areas. I think most judges are up to the

challenge of determining what constitutes an adequate exhibit in a *pro se* domestic bench trial, and do not think the general rule should limit their discretion.

Respectfully,

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