



Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid

1206 Quince St. SE
Olympia, WA 98504
MS 41183
360-704-4135

James A. Bamberger, Director
jim.bamberger@ocla.wa.gov

September 7, 2021

Honorable Charles W. Johnson Supreme Court Rules Committee
c/o Clerk of the Supreme Court Temple of Justice
PO Box 40929
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Proposed GR 40 – Informal Domestic Relations Trials (IDRT)

Dear Justice Johnson and members of the Rules Committee,

I write this brief letter in strong support of the Court's adoption of proposed GR 40. The urgency for adoption of an elective alternative track for domestic relations trials is powerfully outlined in the materials filed with the proponent's GR 9 submission and amply affirmed in the comments submitted by the Supreme Court's Access to Justice Board. A simple process for moving domestic relations conflicts to trial and judicial resolution serves the interests of the parties, enhances access to timely justice and fair outcomes, and assists the courts in unclogging the superior court civil dockets already overwhelmed due to a year and a half of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the threat of post-moratorium unlawful detainer filings, and the prospect of massive new filings in response to the Court's decision in *State v. Blake*.

Proposed GR 40 allows family law litigants to elect an alternative to the normal litigation track. This elective approach to expedited and more informal litigation has been tested elsewhere as well as in here Washington State (King and Thurston Counties). It has proven to be effective and well received.

The pandemic experience has demonstrated the urgency for courts to find new and more effective ways for the civil justice system to work. Along with expanded technologies and streamlined administrative processes, there is great promise in the prospect of new, less costly, less time-consuming, and more litigant-friendly (especially for unrepresented litigants) judicial processes.

The proponent makes a powerful case that the time is now for moving forward with this rule. OCLA encourages the Court's prompt review and approval of the same.

Sincerely,

OFFICE OF CIVIL LEGAL AID

James A. Bamberger, Director

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Linford, Tera](#)
Subject: FW: Proposed GR 40
Date: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 8:20:31 AM
Attachments: [OCLA Comments Re Proposed GR 40 9-7-21.pdf](#)

From: Bamberger, James (OCLA) [mailto:jim.bamberger@ocla.wa.gov]
Sent: Monday, September 6, 2021 10:34 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Cc: Terra Nevitt <terran@wsba.org>; DC Cronin <dc@dccronin.com>
Subject: Proposed GR 40

External Email Warning! This email has originated from outside of the Washington State Courts Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, **DO NOT DO SO!** Instead, report the incident.

Please find attached comments of the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid in support of proposed GR 40.

Jim Bamberger

Jim Bamberger, Director (he/him)
Office of Civil Legal Aid
360-280-1477 (mobile)
Jim.bamberger@ocla.wa.gov