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April 15, 2022

Justice Charles Johnson
Justice Mary Yu
Co-Chairs, Supreme Court Rules Committee
Washington Supreme Court
415 12th Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98501-2314

RE: Proposed Changes to GR 11 and 11.1

Dear Justices Johnson and Yu,

We write on behalf of the Access to Justice Board in support of the Washington State Interpreter Commission's proposed amendments to General Rule 11 and General Rule 11.1. Language access is a pivotal part of accessing the civil legal system, and the proposed amendments recognize the broad role language plays in our courts.

As noted in the Supreme Court's Gender and Justice Commission's recently-released study, *2021: How Gender and Race Affect Justice Now*, lack of court interpreters and translated materials disadvantages people with distinct communication needs. Given that a majority of low-income individuals have both civil legal needs and the inability to access attorney representation, adding language barriers seriously compounds problems facing many in our community.

The proposed amendments to GR 11 and 11.1 recognize that the important language access work being done by the Supreme Court's Interpreter Commission and stakeholders around the state is about much more than the already-critical task of interpreting courtroom proceedings on the record. Indeed, much of civil justice is accessed, not during argument or oral testimony, but in the myriad forms and pleadings required in the dozens of jurisdictions making up Washington's three-level, non-unified court system. This is especially the case in cases where low-income litigants face the most needs, such as when seeking a protection order or in family law, areas which are heavily dependent on forms.

Given the importance of broad language access in accessing equal and equitable justice in Washington's civil legal system, and given the depth and breadth of the work being done by the Interpreter Commission and its numerous stakeholders, the Access to Justice Board supports the proposed amendments to GR 11 and GR 11.1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Francis Adewale", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Francis Adewale, Chair
Access to Justice Board

Cc: Terra Nevitt, Executive Director, Washington State Bar Association
Judge David Keenan, Co-Chair, Access to Justice Rules Committee

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Linford, Tera](#)
Subject: FW: ATJ Board Comments to Proposed Rules Amendments
Date: Monday, April 18, 2022 8:06:27 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-zusggg5t.png](#)
[2022.4.8.GR 11 and 11.1 Proposed Changes.ATJ Board Comments.pdf](#)
[2022.4.8.CJC 2.2 and 2.6 Proposed Changes.ATJ Board Comments.pdf](#)
[2022.4.8.CJC 2.3 Proposed Changes.ATJ Board Comments.pdf](#)

-----Original Message-----

From: Bonnie Sterken [<mailto:bonnies@wsba.org>]
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 4:56 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Cc: Adewale, Francis <fadewale@spokanecity.org>; Keenan, David <David.Keenan@kingcounty.gov>; Terra Nevitt <terran@wsba.org>
Subject: ATJ Board Comments to Proposed Rules Amendments

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Good afternoon,

Attached, please find three letters from the Access to Justice Board in response to proposed changes to the following rules:

- * GR 11 and 11.1
- * CJC 2.3
- * CJC 2.2 and 2.6

Thank you,

[cid:a2455a45-b70d-4158-bf82-f50303d16eaf]

Bonnie Middleton Sterken | Equity and Justice Specialist

Washington State Bar Association | bonnies@wsba.org <<mailto:bonnies@wsba.org>>

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Pronouns: She/Her

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