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Subject: FW: Opposition of Supreme Court Cancelling LLLT License
Date: Monday, March 8, 2021 8:43:43 AM

From: Billie Murray [mailto:billiepsbc@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 6, 2021 7:43 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Opposition of Supreme Court Cancelling LLLT License

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I write today in strong opposition of the recent Supreme Court decision to cancel the Limited License Legal Technician (LLLT) license for any future LLLTs in Washington state. This would be a great injustice to many people like me. The people who need equal access to justice, but do not have the financial means to afford an attorney. I tell you my story in hopes that you understand that I am but one individual, among the masses, who benefit from affordable legal services.

The services that I received from an LLLT helped me through one of the scariest times in my life. I am a single mother of two little boys and have been their primary caretaker. I have been in the middle of a custody battle for over a year now. The father of our children is supported by a very wealthy family. I was bullied with litigation and he threatened to limit my parental rights, just because he could, not for a valid legal reason. I felt trapped, discouraged, and fearful. They knew I did not have the means to fight a long court battle. In addition, my job in the service industry was eliminated during COVID-19, decimating me financially.

After setting up meetings with low income clinics, and having meetings with lawyers, I came across Tamara Garrison's information. Within our first conversation, Tamara provided more insight and clear guidance than I had received so far. I felt that she would go to bat for me. She gave me hope. That hope was EVERYTHING I needed to have the courage to stand up for what was best for my children in court. She was a beacon of light in a very scary and dark time. I cannot express the amount of peace that was brought to me. In her role as an LLLT she stood for something that this country is built on – all voices matter.

For part of my case, I paid an attorney to represent me in court, because it was outside of the scope of a LLLT. The attorney was not responsive, and I almost gave up and accepted that a parent with lucrative means could buy enough justice to bury

me. I reached out to Tamara again and she convinced me to stay in the fight. She assured me that she was there for me. I engaged her services again and my case began to turn around. I had support to make a fair response to the injustice that was put in my path. Tamara helped level the playing field in court.

I am not alone in this struggle. So many parents do their best within their means to do right for their children. Without an LLLT, I would have been left without a choice. Access to justice should be an essential right. It shocks me that the Supreme Court decided to eliminate one of the few low-cost legal resources that the LLLT license provides with little thought or comment from the community. Many people cannot afford an attorney. This directly impacts families, especially when one party has representation and the other is forced to represent themselves. The LLLT license should be strongly supported, not eliminated.

Tamara passionately advocated for my case, she clearly advised me on the court system and my legal rights, and she achieved a positive outcome for my children. Tamara saved the lives of two little boys, who now have a better quality of life. That is what it comes down to. Without that option, you deny people with low incomes the equal right to fight for their families and understand their legal options.

Without access to LLLTs, I fear many people will not be granted the help to navigate the system. Their ability to clearly tell the other side of the story will be impeded because they cannot afford a legal advocate. Society should not be built on how much justice you can buy, but on the foundation that every voice should be heard. Tamara, in her role as an LLLT, gave me a voice.

The LLLT license is a lifeline to equality that should not be taken away, with little thought of the impact to the public, in a closed meeting with the Supreme Court. LLLTs work diligently for their clients, against extreme opposition from attorneys, for a fraction of the pay. They are basically a human rights movement for the financial underdog in family court.

I fear what will happen if the LLLT license is eliminated. I do not worry for myself, but I worry for innocent children without a voice, who will suffer the most. They deserve a fair shot. Their fate should not be determined by the size of a parent's bank account.

People should not struggle to simply be heard. Taking away the LLLT license will further the gap in this system of access to legal help. This serves no one. I cannot in good faith sit quietly without speaking out. We must stop blindly accepting that justice is something to be bought.

If the license is banned, we are going backwards. The LLLT program was my only resource for help and I am certain I am not the only person who received essential advocacy. Do not stifle our voices. Listen to us, those in need. This should not be another circumstance where attorneys have a louder voice than the people in need of access to justice.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Billie Murray