

Supreme Court

April 20, 2021

State of Washington

I am writing to express concern about the plan to eliminate the Limited Legal License Technician (LLLT) program in Washington State. Our state was a pioneer in creating this program and I think it would be a mistake to abandon it. I learned of the program only recently and am concerned that it did not receive the promotion and support it deserved. The LLLT position fills a gap in providing more accessible and affordable services covering many commonly encountered legal situations that do not require escalation to the level of a fully trained lawyer.

As a physician, I am aware of the concerns regarding competence and competition from practitioners with less comprehensive and time-consuming career paths, in the case of medicine, for nurse practitioners (NPs) or physician assistants (PAs). However few would disagree that these professions fill a critical niche in light of the shortage of providers to treat common ailments and underserved populations. Standardized training and recognized certification programs help ensure the safety of those they serve. Similarly most people at some point in their lives need help with commonly encountered legal matters that can be as well addressed by a person with focused training and certification of competency, saving more complex situations for a degreed lawyer.

An additional benefit of continuing the LLLT program is that it is an attainable career goal for people who need or wish to get on with their lives without the time and financial commitment required for law school. It provides a well-paying, meaningful career path for people for whom law school might not be a practical option, with the potential to provide critical service to communities where the needs may be greatest. Loan repayment incentives could be provided, as they are in medicine, for LLLTs to practice in underserved communities.

The scope of practice for LLLTs should be expanded beyond family law to other areas of commonly needed legal assistance, including elder care, housing, small business, native issues, community re-entry, and many more. This should be done to provide affordable access across a range of needs and to attract people to the profession who may have a particular area of interest or passion. Many NPs and PAs choose a narrow but highly skilled subspecialty focus that uniquely positions them for providing high-level care that does not require years of academic training.

In summary, I strongly advocate for continuing the LLLT program for both the benefit of providing/expanding access to affordable legal services and as a career path for people looking for a meaningful service-oriented profession. The program deserves a fair chance at success before being dismissed.

Sincerely,

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Hello -

Please find attached my letter in support of continuing the LLLT program.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Mayer