

LLLT Rule Comment

[Nancy Ivarinen](#)

27 27 unread replies. 50 50 replies.

Discuss with your classmates at least 4 reasons why the LLLT program should or should not be sunset (discontinued).

You must post your comment before you can read others, but can then comment on other people's ideas.

Materials related to this discussion are posted in this weeks module.

The Washington Supreme Court in June 2020 said the LLLT program was "sunset." All existing LLLTs and those in the "pipeline" who complete the requirements can retain their license but there will be no new LLLTs.

The Court has just published the LLLT sunset rule for comments.

The issues will also be discussed in a Zoom lecture on 1-25-2021. If after you have considered these issues you would like to send your comments to the Court, please do.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion KRYSTINA L WILLIAMS](#)

KRYSTINA L WILLIAMS (No Preference)

Jan 19, 2021 Jan 19 at 1:23pm

I am of the firm opinion that the LLLT program should NOT be discontinued.

1. More Access to Assistance

There are many individuals who simply do not know their situation or what legal remedies may be available to them and it is not uncommon that these individuals do not have the monetary resources to pay for an hour with an attorney. Additionally, some clients have a hard time figuring out (1) the necessary forms and (2) what information they need to put on the forms.

With the help of an LLLT, these clients are able to get reliable help and get what they want from their parenting plan or child support order rather than trying to explain to the Court what they want and receiving something they had not intended.

2. Less Expensive Route

As stated above, there are many individuals that need assistance but do not have the resources to pay for an attorney. With an LLLT, the rates are reduced which allows individuals to get a consult without having to pay a large fee. The fact that Washington didn't think it was generating the revenue it should is a little astonishing considering the point of the LLLT program was to help those with low income.

3. Alternative Law Career

I had originally started at Whatcom for the paralegal program, but before registration I was introduced to the LLLT program. It sounded like an incredible opportunity to help individuals that did not require a law degree. For those like me who have no interest in going to law school but still have an interest in law and helping others, the LLLT is a great middle ground. I thought the LLLT program was an incredible opportunity and was shocked that more states had not thought about something similar. It really hurts my heart that Washington didn't give it a proper chance. The Washington LLLT program has inspired so many other states to pursue a similar program which has helped individuals in those states get the legal help they need.

4. Unfair to Current Students

The LLLT core classes take about 2 years to finish and another 1.5 years of hours to meet the experience requirement. When the sunset order was first announced, I was only about halfway through the core classes and had not completed the necessary classes to enroll in the Family Law classes. The Court did waive the prerequisite requirement, but I don't believe that will promote much success for the students. Many students are having to choose whether to continue the LLLT program or change careers. Even if they decide to get their paralegal degree, depending on how far along they are in the program, they could have spent thousands of dollars on classes they no longer need. Additionally, as of right now the LLLT exam is only offered once. Meaning, if a student takes the test and fails, there are no dates available able to retake the test. To put this into perspective, most states allow unlimited attempts to pass the bar exam. There are 21 states that limit bar exam attempts, however, even these states allow 2-6 attempts.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Cynthia "Synth" Surber](#)

[Cynthia "Synth" Surber \(She/Her\)](#)

Jan 20, 2021 Jan 20 at 1:31pm

Hi Krystina,

The WSBA LLLT board has actually given us 3 dates to take the LLLT Bar exam, the one in Yakima at the end of June, then one in Feb '22(location TBA) and the last one in June of '22.

But all in all I agree with all you said.

Synth

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion KRYSTINA L WILLIAMS](#)

KRYSTINA L WILLIAMS (*No Preference*)

Jan 25, 2021 Jan 25 at 5:42pm

- •

Hi Synth,

Thank you for letting me know! I had no idea about the 3 other test dates so that's really good to know.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Carey Gardner](#)

Carey Gardner

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 9:52pm

- •

Interesting, it didn't even occur to me that sun setting was unfair to current students. I think it's a beautiful throng to want to help underserved individuals protect their families. Why make it harder?

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Cirrus Cloud](#)

Cirrus Cloud (*They/Them*)

Jan 19, 2021 Jan 19 at 1:35pm

For this I will be discussing four reasons the LLLT program should not be discontinued or sunset.

To begin, there is the fact that the sunsetting plan itself is flawed, even with cutting down on the hours of work under supervision of a lawyer, it does still not provide adequate time to people currently in the program to complete all their coursework, tests, and time working under a lawyer. Not to mention the fact that community colleges generally discontinue programs over three to four years, not two.

Community colleges and law schools are then my second reason the program should not be sunset. Schools, and students, have invested a great deal into this program. Students have taken out loans to help them work towards a license they might not have time to complete given the sunsetting timeline, making it wasted. Colleges and law schools have made investments of their own by constructing programs for LLLTs.

My third reason that the program should not be sunset is that it provides an incredibly valuable service. 85% of low income families and almost 75% of middle income families cannot afford legal representation. LLLTs were able to provide life changing help in family law to these disenfranchised groups, sunsetting that program means thousands of Washingtonians are going to be priced out of the legal marketplace. This was already a problem before LLLTs became available, and now it will only worsen.

The last reason I have is related to low and middle income families needing representation. We are only beginning to see the profound effects the Covid-19 pandemic is having on our economy and our lives. People are going to continue to need help in family law matters, and in all likelihood, fewer of them will be able to afford legal representation. This is the worst possible time to sunset a program that helps so many people.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Cynthia "Synth" Surber](#)

Cynthia "Synth" Surber (*She/Her*)

Jan 20, 2021 Jan 20 at 1:34pm

- Cirrus,

I agree with everything you wrote-ESPECIALLY regarding the money, time and education the colleges and their faculty have put into the program.

Synth

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Madison Lung](#)

Madison Lung

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 1:07pm

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Cirrus,

I agree with all your points, especially the one regarding covid-19's effects on this issue. New stats are showing a rise in domestic and sexual violence with the global pandemic, so again it is so important that people have some access to legal advice. It is just unfair to limit certain groups of people from legal resources in a time when they may need it the most.

-Maddy L

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Dnae Owen](#)

Dnae Owen

Jan 19, 2021 Jan 19 at 2:44pm

I think it is unfortunate that the LLLT program has been suspended. In not allowing further people to train to become an LLLT, the Washington Supreme Court is inhibiting both access to law practice as a career, and accessible legal assistance for people who need it.

The biggest issue I have with the sunset of the program is the backdoor process the WA Supreme Court took. No public hearing, no allowance for comment until after the order was passed. We need better access to legal help specifically to counter issues like this. It is not right for the WA Supreme Court to be able to take away an important facet of our legal system without listening to the needs of the people it serves.

In addition to this, the sunset of the program means that there will become less and less LLLT's, limiting affordable options for low income citizens. If I were to need to get a divorce, file for custody, or deal with a family law issue, I would never be able to afford a lawyer. It is not just me that has this issue, 10% of WA's population lives under the poverty line; 15% of Whatcom County. Washington's Employment Security Department estimates that 225,300 live in Whatcom County, leaving 3,525 people without affordable access to the legal process.

Furthermore, this decision puts both students and colleges in a tight financial position during an already strenuous pandemic. Sunsetting the program forces students to make hard financial choices, potentially putting themselves further into debt, or worse, landing them in debt without certification to work. With a limited number of LLLT's remaining after the ability to become certified is gone, the prices will inevitably inflate, negating the purpose of the program further.

If this were an issue of people having access to healthcare, food, or housing, would the issue be treated the same way? It isn't right that these issues are treated differently, all of them are equally pivotal.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Cirrus Cloud](#)

Cirrus Cloud (*They/Them*)

Jan 20, 2021 Jan 20 at 12:29pm

Hi Dnea, I really appreciate the points you made! It was incredibly unfair to me that the WA Supreme court did not have a public hearing or allowance for comment until after the order was passed, and I recall in the document by the LLLT Board they received little to no forewarning. For such an important and appreciated program, it shocks me that such a decision happened behind closed doors. The limiting of affordable legal options to citizens is unconscionable. Your mention of how LLLT prices will go up is something I hadn't thought of, but I definitely can see happening as they become more and more in demand. I believe you are right in saying that if this

was in issue in access to healthcare, food, and housing, the issue would be treated differently, and I think the response would be stronger. But having access to legal representation, especially in family law, is so important to peoples lives.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Dnae Owen](#)

Dnae Owen

Jan 21, 2021 Jan 21 at 9:29pm

- •

I appreciate your comment. I think trying to pass any legislation without allowing public hearing or comment is incredibly suspicious. It makes me question how the motives of closing the program could actually be beneficial.

When a service, item, or commodity becomes scarce, its value rises in accordance to the demand for it. Limiting the amount of LLLT's that can exist will only drive the price up, thats just economics. I'm probably just repeating myself unnecessarily, but this is something I think is really important for people to understand, given that the intention of the LLLT program was to make legal help more accessible.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Cynthia "Synth" Surber](#)

Cynthia "Synth" Surber (*She/Her*)

Jan 20, 2021 Jan 20 at 1:36pm

- Dnae,

I love your last sentence. I would love to hear what the Justices answer would be.

Synth

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Kari A. Koens](#)

Kari A. Koens (*She/Her*)

Jan 23, 2021 Jan 23 at 12:02pm

- •

Dnae

Your commentary was point on. However, I must say, "YOUR LAST SENTENCE WAS A "BALL BUSTER!!!" and a point of view I personally had not thought of, thank you for making me think.

Kari

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Cynthia "Synth" Surber](#)

Cynthia "Synth" Surber (*She/Her*)

Jan 20, 2021 Jan 20 at 1:28pm

Class, Professor,

Where do I start with how I feel about the LLLT program and its 'sunsetting' and the WA Supreme Court's recent Order?

RE: WA SC

1. I think they were cowards and underhanded to end the program the way they did. Not in an open forum, not during the LLLT BOG meeting the week before, not during regular business hours...no...they did it the morning of one of the most horrific examples of rough justice with George Floyd...and then... and THEN they issued a letter about freedom and equality and justice. Really?

2. Gonzales has made no bones about his displeasure with the LLLT program. He has been pushing for its annihilation since he was elected to the Court. Now as Chief Justice it will be a bigger battle to keep the LLLT program alive.

3. For whatever reason, there is a disconnect between what Gonzales and the SC say they are for and what is promoted. There were a lot of problems with the WSBA in the last 5 years while the licensed LLLT's out there were putting their boots to the ground. Taking Gonzales again as an example- he is supported by every union, democratic, progressive group- the very people who become the LLLT or who are served by LLLT's-so why does he not get that **he is punishing the very people who are in the LLLT program.** If we all were super honor geniuses that got full ride scholarships to the top 3 Ivy League type schools to not one but two international universities – A Rhodes Scholar scholarship to a top Uni in Japan for 2 years, he also got one to one in China from the Rotary Club. The guy is a genius. He is of Jewish and Mexican heritage. This Justice should be our biggest ally and yet he hates the LLLT program.

4. The Justices don't even know what they are doing. The new Order states that the SC 'voted' on the sunseting of the program on JULY 8th...ummmm no ---how about a WHOLE month before---again---George Floyd day-"I can't BREATHE!". That was the 8th of JUNE my friends. Then there is the whole what to do when you have to disbar a LLLT verbiage, nevermind, there are no LLLT's to discipline.

RE: The LLLT program itself – and why I am for it.

As a Student:

1. Cost – Why go to a full law school, get in debt for the next 10 years, FORCED to work at a high level stressed out law firm to pay off said debt. No Thank You. Thanks to the option of being able to use our AA as a foundation to build on, the cost of the LLLT program amounts to 15k verses 150k, and as per our training we hit the ground running with thousands of hours of on the ground training. NO recent law student can say that. None.

2. Practice area- Family Law is the only area I want to work in so the LLLT program fits like a glove. Also I like the part of not having to appear in court. I have a BIG mouth and an even smaller filter-and I know my limits with my Complex PTSD and TBI's and ACE's and such. I know where I can best serve my people...it's not there!

3. Rigorous Curriculum – You have to be hardcore about wanting to help people but you also want to be as educated and prepared for the level of work required in law.

4. Resilient- I know this- every single LLLT has jumped through more hoops than a basketball at a Lakers game. We have had to fight and crawl and drag ourselves through whatever convoluted amendments to the Order(or Non-Order) the SC, the WSBA, and the LLLT BOG kept coming up with and changing. I can guarantee if most of the members of the WSBA had to jump through all these silly steps you would have half the lawyers you have now. JMHO.

As a Consumer:

1. We the People, need affordable, credible, and verifiable legal assistance for pro se's, pro bono's, low bono citizens. It is OUR right.

2. It is in the best interest of the legal consumer to have a full spectrum of legal services available to the general public.
3. It is to the Courts advantage to have legal practitioners such as LLLT's to keep the courts effective, efficient, and time savers of the courts time.
4. Culturally, there are a lot of groups that do not feel comfortable dealing with 'a lawyer' but they would someone they consider to be more 'on their level'.

As a Social Advocate:

1. Becoming a LLLT ensures that there is set avenue for affordable Access to Justice for pro se clients.
2. Keeps cost of services low for low to middle income families. Most would rather pay \$150 vs \$200-\$300 an hour. Most would rather spend \$5k on their dissolution vs \$20k.
3. Being able to offer pro or low bono to DV/SV clientele BECAUSE we (LLLTs) are not up to our ears in law school debt.
4. LLLTs can and do offer an amazing resource for pro se clients. This is advocacy in motion. LLLTs are built to help due to our education costs being low. We get to pass on our savings to the consumer!

I could go on...I am SUPER passionate about the LLLT program. I would love to talk with others that are passionate about it too.

Synth

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Dnae Owen](#)

Dnae Owen

Jan 21, 2021 Jan 21 at 9:33pm

I think your point about being able to offer pro bono services to DV survivors is something important to think about! A lot of people do not understand that a lot of marriage dissolutions and custody issues happen because of domestic abuse. Having the ability to get out of a legal relationship with someone, or to protect your children, is incredibly important!

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Cynthia "Synth" Surber](#)

Cynthia "Synth" Surber (*She/Her*)

Jan 22, 2021 Jan 22 at 12:09pm

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Dnae,

Absolutely - DV/SV victims are generally not allowed any involvement in the household finances due to the controlling spouse. I see that happen a lot in CASA cases, where the 'mom' says they want the 'dad' to not go to jail because they are afraid of being homeless and destitute. Many have no access to bank accounts and generally the abuser puts the utilities in the abused name so they can shaft them when things don't go their way.

Synth

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Kari A. Koens](#)

Kari A. Koens (*She/Her*)

Jan 23, 2021 Jan 23 at 11:57am

- Synth

If I went thru and made comments on how great each comment was that you made, it would be as long as my paper. You did a great job and you don't have to say that your passionate about the LLLT program. Your words demonstrated this very clearly. KUDOS!!

Kari

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion KRYSTINA L WILLIAMS](#)

KRYSTINA L WILLIAMS (No Preference)

Jan 25, 2021 Jan 25 at 5:59pm

- Hi Synth,

I thought your post regarding the LLLT program was fantastic! I truly admire your passion and appreciate all the work you've put into notifying students about the Court Order and encouraging others to speak out and tell their stories.

I thought what you said regarding the rigorous curriculum was wonderful. The LLLT program is difficult in itself let alone throwing in a time crunch! I am currently in Family Law II with Jen and there's SO MUCH information LLLTs need to know. Not just what LLLTs can do but she also teaches us things that are out of scope. I also liked what you said about the LLLTs currently in the pipeline being Resilient, especially when you said, "We have had to fight and crawl and drag ourselves through whatever convoluted amendments to the Order(or Non-Order) the SC, the WSBA, and the LLLT BOG kept coming up with and changing." They keep throwing things at the LLLTs but we're still fighting and I think it's inspiring! For those individuals that become LLLTs, I have no doubt they will be incredibly passionate and motivated to help as many people as they can because of what they had to go through to get there.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion KATIE A BOS](#)

KATIE A BOS

Jan 27, 2021 Jan 27 at 12:50pm

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I agree that it is in the best interest to have the program and so unsettling to hear the thought of restricting the program.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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Kari A. Koens (She/Her)

Jan 23, 2021 Jan 23 at 11:49am

I am finally getting to do my dream of law. Since, the 8th grade, "I" proclaimed to my mother, "One day I will be a lawyer and make a difference." As, we all know, life happens, and our journeys get a little derailed". It is what you do with those derailments that can continue to lead you on the path that you declared so long ago, as a child.

Then, the two-to-three-year plan that was financially and emotionally laid out has been condensed into one year. If, I wanted to be completely broke all at once and an emotional basket case trying to obtain all the information at one time; I would have gone the path of law school as suggested by the counselor since already having a bachelor's degree. I did not choose that path, doing the Limited License Legal Technician option made more sense to me and my family. Due to the Supreme Court, sunseting the LLLT program, I feel rushed in every possible way of learning. I am trying to make sure that I do not miss a step. How is this fair in their eyes, where is the common sense and justice in any of this ruling? These are elected officials, by the people.

I have many more than four reasons and can go on with long and incomplete sentences once the thoughts get going, I just type. However, this is an assignment. I will do my best to leave the long incomplete sentences. If I do miss one, I truly apologize in advance I am really angry that someone is messing with my education process.

1) One of the main reasons that the LLLT was designed was to be able to serve those who were unable to access affordable legal aid. Unfortunately, this does not refer to just those in the 0% to 200% which is the federal poverty level. It also refers to that single parent that is working three jobs, falls in the 200% to 400%. This is an individual who is working three jobs to pay their bills not to buy luxury material "things." However, when push comes to shove and they need to hire an attorney that is out of their grasp, they would be able to refer to a LLLT. This is what the LLLT was designed for, helping those that need legal aid/justice that cannot afford the process.

2) The Washington LLLT program must be doing something right! Other states are starting to follow are lead, Utah has adopted a similar rule for the implementing a form of the LLLT. Not far behind with possible adoption of similar license are including but not limited to Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Minnesota, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Ontario (Another Providence/country wants to be like us. I mean this can not be as awful as the Supreme Court is making it out to be?) So, we are not California which is normally the leader when it comes to establishing "laws" first. We were first, sometimes it takes a while for GREAT ideas to catch on, but it has so why on Earth take it away, do not change what is good and working because you do not understand it.

3) No matter how an individual identifies their gender type, I think that the one thing that by getting rid of the LLLT program is that those with DV/SA cases will not have the resources in a timely fashion. (Only if the victim makes that choice to pursue the assailant) A LLLT can guide a victim thru the complex legal forms/files in order to start the process and lead them to the right counsel if needed too. The individuals are already dealing with a tragic experience. Then they are having to learn how to navigate the legal system without the right guidance for someone that is not knowledgeable with the justice system can be just as traumatic. Guidance with a LLLT can help them know that they are getting thru the process accurately.

4) As we look at a whole now as to what is coming down our countries pipeline with the evictions to be skyrocketing, I have to ask myself? Are attorney's really going to want to take all these cases on for the pennies? Answer the same questions over and over? Some will have a heart of gold, do not get me wrong but others will bat an eye and not help at all. This is where we as LLLT can help the American public, we have to get our hours (1500) the opportunity will be there for us. If they "sunset" the program none of this will matter for the future individuals that want the chance to pursue the program. Where there is a will there is a way. (Kind of a cheesy statement; but applicable)

As, I began with that this was my dream which has taken me 35 years to get to. Designing this Limited License Legal Technician Program was someone else's dream which has taken, I believe 10 years and complete dedication to truly get up and running. The Washington Supreme Court took less than a day to wipe the dream away. There are 275 individuals that want to experience being a Limited License Legal Technician and might not get to ever achieve that dream. Let your voices be heard in expressing why this program should not be "sunset". Tell your family, friends, anyone that will listen, and post how important and passionate you are about saving this program. You have a First Amendment Right, you have to use it! Lastly, do not have the attitude that someone else is expressing their opinion, so I do not need to because someone else is doing it. Everyone needs to be voicing their opinion. If you take the attitude everybody else is writing letters it may cost you and others our future, in making our "DREAMS a reality", write a letter.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Cynthia "Synth" Surber](#)

Cynthia "Synth" Surber (She/Her)

Jan 23, 2021 Jan 23 at 10:33pm

• Kari, Kari, Kari...I like you. You are spunky just like me!

I commend you on your excellent post. It was Spot On and succinct. Well done, and well said.

I want to touch on so many things but I want to focus my energy to the ones that popped out to me most:

1. *"Due to the Supreme Court, sunseting the LLLT program, I feel rushed in every possible way of learning. I am trying to make sure that I do not miss a step. How is this fair in their eyes, where is the common sense and justice in any of this ruling?"* I hear and feel you - my whole family which includes myself my two teens and my MIL have all been invested in this as much as me. They didn't only mess up my life path for the next year - they messed up my husband who is a full time student at Lower Columbia College getting an AA in Chemical Dependency/Allied Health- We had planned on graduating together--Not happening now...which messed up the financial plan-never mind doing 15 CR load semesters and classes built to build on are instead having to be taken simultaneously. On top of that I am now teaching my 16 going on 17 yo special needs daughter to stay on track to be a Senior next year- and a 14 yo son that wasn't a really quick worker wayyyyy before COVID and para-educate with him too to keep him on track and motivated. The school and the district want these kids to do 5 hours a day of schooling --- ONLINE---so I am pretty darn mad the Courtis making me do 3 years of stuff in 1 year. Ridiculous.

2. *"These are elected officials, by the people."* WE need to remind them of that.

3. *"Where there is a will there is a way."* AbsoFREAKINlutely.

4. *"We were first, sometimes it takes a while for GREAT ideas to catch on, but it has so why on Earth take it away, do not change what is good and working because you do not understand it."* It took Elon Musk, with his SpaceX engineers and his team TEN years of work before his Falcon/DragonDemo2-[1st manned space flight since the last Space Shuttle-to take off and launch successfully]-six of those years directly with NASA after they won the contract...stuff that matters, stuff that will be worth take time to get the proper feedback - there is no need to be so flippant about the THOUSANDS who have worked to make the LLLT program a viable legal A2J option.

BONUS: Thank you , thank you , t.h.a.n.k.y.o.u. - for writing: a LLLT...not an LLLT--triple L's do not a vowel make. Bad English and someone is obviously NOT paying attention to Brian A. Garner!

TEAMWORK makes the DREAM work!!!

Synth

Edited by [Cynthia "Synth" Surber](#) on Jan 23 at 10:39pm
[Reply](#) [Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion 890127999](#)

[890127999](#)

Jan 25, 2021 Jan 25 at 9:55pm

- Such passion! It's great to see. I had never even heard of the LLLT option until just a few months ago, but if there were more time to pursue it I'd be really interested. At this point, I have missed the boat, but I do hope you are able to make it happen. With your dedication, I have no doubt.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion KATIE A BOS](#)

KATIE A BOS

Jan 27, 2021 Jan 27 at 12:52pm

• •

I like how your so passionate regarding justice for this LLLT program and inspired by your desire to purse others to speak up.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion 890127999](#)

890127999

Jan 25, 2021 Jan 25 at 9:44pm

After reading about the LLLT program, the services it provides, the needs of the public, and the process by which the decision to end the program came about, I can see multiple reasons why it should remain intact.

1. Family law is in dire need of better access. According to the Seattle Times article, almost 85% of low-income, and nearly 75% of moderate-income Washingtonians cannot afford any type of legal service! The program authorized LLLTs to perform basic services without the supervision of a lawyer, including helping clients prepare and review documents and forms, and explaining family law legal procedures, a much-needed service.
2. As mentioned in Monday's lecture, it is standard for any college to have 3-4 year teachout period before a program is cancelled, to allow current participants the opportunity to finish their studies, but the initial letter announcing the sunseting of the LLLT program only gave 13 months. This is not enough time to permit students to finish

obtaining their credentials, perform the 3000 hours working under a lawyer's supervision, and pass the appropriate exams (offering them only one attempt at passing, no less).

3. After its inception in 2012, the program is still in its early stages of existence, but there exists the argument that the program was not worth the effort to continue offering it as it is underused and too costly to fund, using 1% of the Washington State Bar Association's annual budget. Aside from the fact that this price tag does not sound excessive, why was there not an opportunity to seek alternative funding or develop creative solutions to funding concerns?
4. The decision to end the program was made at WSBA's request and without holding a public hearing. Without opportunity for instructors, students, lawyers, clients, and the general population to comment, the possibility of reaching any sort of meeting of the minds or sharing possible solutions to address concerns on all sides was denied.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Cynthia "Synth" Surber](#)

Cynthia "Synth" Surber (*She/Her*)

Jan 27, 2021 Jan 27 at 5:30pm

- Celina,

Great post.

Two things I want to touch on.

1. The 3,000 hrs is now down to 1,500, and we get a year after the death date in June of 2021-So by June 2022.
2. The actual start date for the first cohort of LLLT's was 2015. Five years is not enough time for a good summation of the program's pro's or con's.

Thx

Synth

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Shana Stewart](#)

Shana Stewart

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 11:55pm

- •

Good Evening Celina,

I think that your #4 point is the one that stands out as very ODD to me, but is a GREAT point!

Why would a court not hold a comment period for sunseting? Why would the WSBA want to sunset a program that would find its most need during a pandemic when the economy is suffering and the LLLT's services need will explode? Why did a group of lawyers- whom are known to represent facts and use facts, not present all the facts of who is being served by LLLT, how much per hour, and the outcomes of the cases in LLLT representations, and gather comments?

Shana

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion KATIE A BOS](#)

KATIE A BOS

Jan 26, 2021 Jan 26 at 4:10pm

- After reviewing the LLT program I concluded that this seems to be the most devastating situation imaginable for the work that had hours spent working on the program and to see it dwindle without actually giving it a chance is saddening. I am upset for the fellow students who I had met (which were many) in my prior classes working towards accomplishing the hours and schooling necessary in completing the requirements and law office experience. I however am not affected, but will help others who are going through this possibility.

I believe the program is eye opening to the public, most living in a situation who needs legal advice and cannot afford an attorney , or who just needs help where, how, and who to file cases, pleadings. I personally tried using the program months ago for help in a civil matter, and they seemed awful busy to even get in touch with. So I know that the program is needed and important. In Criminal cases you are appointed to a public defender who can help you in your case. But what about the parent who needs to file a parenting plan, with no income. Good luck finding any help in this matter unless you hire a paid attorney. Know where will anyone help with the process and that's a fact. Or what about filing a law suit, making sure you know what

and where to file. Have fun going through that with no help either. I do no, court clerks do not help with this. I do not think its smart of the action to sunset the program. Going to law school is a damn lot of work and schooling, with all the new arising cases whos going to help the underprivileged low income families? Lawyers will be up to their ears in case work and turn them away.

Another reason to keep this program is to allow a change, something different for students to get hands on learning and schooling without entering law school, they still under my assumption have to pass the bar and have experience filing, so let them? Cases will never dissolve, and are always going to be in need, having someone dedicated to put the time and effort and hours should show that they really want to pursue this.

I also think they have not given the program the opportunity to see their LLLT personal accomplishments, maybe they should try contacting them and notice the three day wait for being excessively too busy to respond? Maybe this would give them a wake up call that it is IN NEED.

They may just need the program more readily available and advertised so that the community knows where to go and who to get in touch with? Marketing? to enter the program. I am so sorry for the people who put in all their efforts and hope for a positive outcome. I am unsure if I have four reasons, but this is what I believe should be the eye opener for the courts to decide and to think of before they tear down someone's dream of helping others.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Madison Lung](#)

Madison Lung

Jan 27, 2021 Jan 27 at 7:03pm

1. • Getting rid of the LLLT program would essentially remove a more economically viable option for clients needing legal representation in family court. With the average cost of a lawyer for a family court dispute being 250-285 an hour, the client could end up paying 5,000+ dollars total for representation. According to the Seattle Times, the average cost for an LLLT is 60-120 dollars an hour. Though these are rough averages, it is clear that the most affordable option for someone seeking representation would be a licensed legal technician. Without LLTS, anyone below the median income level would most likely have take a big hit if they wanted any legal representation. It seems economically discriminatory that the Washington Supreme Court would unilaterally decide to sunset a program that largely benefits a specific group of people. Moreover, it doesn't seem fair that the the decision-making parties won't wait for the study that could show direct benefits to LLLT program that allows for more access to legal aid.

2. Once LLLT's have completed all the requirements in the program, they are licensed and allowed to advise and offer legal services only in family court matters. Family court handles cases such as: domestic violence, adoption, child support, and divorce etc... According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence web page, "1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner." With statistics like that, you have to wonder why on earth a supreme court would decide that there isn't a huge need for more legal access especially in the area of law that deals with domestic violence cases? Survivors of domestic violence, can often be left in situation where they have little access to legal advice/assistance and the economic resources to pay for it. This in turn can keep people in situations that can be fatal. Taking away the only paraprofessional program that allows for more access to legal resources for survivors, is just another reason why this decision to sunset the LLLT program lacks empathy and merit.

3. Something that was noted in the LLLT Board letter to the WA Supreme Court was that the LLLT program isn't a "solution," but rather a "tool." With family law cases making up a large chunk of legal cases in the U.S, why wouldn't the judicial system at large benefit from more resources. Like we talked about during our zoom meeting, under article VI; the U.S constitution loosely states that any defendant is provided representation if they cannot afford it on their own. Thought LLLT's cannot stand up and represent in court, they often assist clients with every step in family court cases and provide the bridge between the layman and the court to people who need the help. It seems unconstitutional to take away resources that further the original goal in providing access to legal help for those who need it.

4. Another reason they should at least delay the sunset of the LLLT program, is that people who had already invested time and money in the program, might not be able to finish before that June 31st, 2022. Someone in a paralegal degree like us may have been planning to jump ship and finish up the LLLT program instead or concurrently and now they don't have that option. Even if students hadn't already enrolled in a LLLT program, they may have recently changed a major in an undergrad program so that they could become ready for entry in an LLLT program. This decision to sunset the LLLT certificate option in schools, is essentially defunding a program that was growing and evolving without considering any economical or ethical ramifications.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Jennifer Max](#)

Jennifer Max

Jan 30, 2021 Jan 30 at 3:51pm

I am not in the LLLT program, and I am really only learning about it through this course, but I disagree with the decision to sunset the LLLT program. The Supreme Court's decision to sunset the LLLT program was made without any public input or transparency. It is surprising that so few of the stakeholders were able to give input before a decision was made. It seems shortsighted to not include those who would be affected the most by ending the LLLT programs, the students, the instructors, the institutions, and the public who would be served by the technicians, instead only giving weight only to the comments and arguments of a special interest group of lawyers who opposed the program.

The extremely limited timeframe in which current LLLT students have to complete the program is far too prohibitive and will lead to wasted opportunity and financial costs as students will need to drop the program that they've already invested time and money in. The Higher Education Opportunity Act requires accrediting bodies to require a teach-out plan, in fact the NWCCU who accredits Whatcom Community College requires a teach-out plan that allows all currently enrolled students time and opportunity to complete the program that is being phased out.

There is a clear need for the existence of paraprofessionals practicing in law. Just as the nurse practitioner expanded access to primary care, LLLTs would expand access to affordable legal "care." As of 2019, according to the Federal Reserve, only 63% of Americans could afford to use cash or cash equivalent to cover a \$400 expense, the remainder would either not be able to afford the expense or would need to borrow or sell possessions to cover the cost. Of those 63% who could afford to pay with cash or equivalent, many would still need to defer payment on some other monthly bill in order to cover the expense.

The court's own Civil Legal Needs Study only confirms the need for expanded access to civil justice. Many people, not just those living near federal poverty levels, could not afford the three to five thousand dollars in up front retaining fees for an emergent legal issue. Indigent defendants are given the right to competent court ordered representation in criminal matters, and yet the working poor are left with little to no access to legal representation in civil matters.

We live in an era of unprecedented access to information and the democratization of education, so the notion that LLLTs would damage the integrity of the legal profession seems overly regressive, especially when the available data shows a clear need for the expansion of access to the law. The decision to sunset the LLLT only benefits a relatively small special interest group and does not address the needs of the majority.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion KELLY PADDEN](#)

KELLY PADDEN

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 12:53am

- Hello Jennifer,

Thank you for your support in the LLLT program. The limited time frame they provided students is frustrating. I only have a quarter left to finish my AS in Paralegal and Certificate in the LLLT program. I missed the sunsetted deadline and unfortunately, it is too late to change the direction of my degree. I am sure there are others too that are unable to change theirs. Hopefully, they will revisit this decision and give the program another try.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Dnae Owen](#)

Dnae Owen

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 5:30pm

- I love that you brought up the analogy of nurse practitioner and medicine! Your last paragraph was very spicy, loved the use of the word regressive.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion GAIL M SPURRIER](#)

GAIL M SPURRIER

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 8:12pm

- Hello Jennifer,

Your post is so elegant. You are right on point, in every aspect of how this has been mishandled. You provided great examples of the need for LLLTs.

Your post is exactly what the State Supreme Court justices need to understand. I hope you will consider providing the Court with your post.

For myself, I am grateful for your submission. For reminding me that intelligence wins out over passion - in my case - that feeling of righteous anger...something I have experienced once or twice in my 3 score and 6 years.

Anyway, please know I enjoyed reading your post. I really, really enjoyed it. Thank you.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Carey Gardner](#)

Carey Gardner

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 9:59pm

- •

Well said. I am nowhere near the federal poverty level, but with the cost of living being what is today, there's no way I could afford emergency legal representation. Especially with student loans.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion KELLY PADDEN](#)

KELLY PADDEN

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 12:21am

- I do not believe the LLLT program should be sunsetted. I believe that fair, equal access to the law should be accessible to everyone and right now that is not the case. The LLLT program narrows that gap of unfair access for those who cannot afford a lawyer and need help. It also, at the same time, opens a new profession to those who cannot afford or have the time to become lawyers but are capable to work in the LLLT capacity. LLLT's also provides a service to lawyers. They are able to help with cases and broaden the scope of services for lawyers practices which brings in more revenue. Finally, the LLLT program saves the courts time and money. If the general public has more access to help, it can mean faster times in processing cases, fewer court appearances, fewer filings and refilings and less usage of the courts resources for unnecessary and expensive expenditures. Easier and more readably available, affordable access to the courts will help narrow the gap between the people and the government.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Erin Bersch](#)

Erin Bersch

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 8:16am

1. The purpose of the LLLT program was to revolutionize how people received family law services. The program was sunset before it could really begin. It take more than 8 years for something like this to really “take off.” Meanwhile, other states are rolling out their own program similar to that of the LLLT.
2. The people who sit in upper level positions with the decision making power to sunset the program are anti-LLLTT supporters, claiming that LLLTs program cost too much. This was not true, especially when compared to other WSBA costs and expenses
3. Because of the time limit to get all of the education requirements done, tripleT students are experiencing a terrible impact on their lives in order to meet the requirements through those constraints. Personally, I am working for free in order to gain experience as a triple LT and in the legal field in general, when I decided to make this careers switch, I committed to it, however I did not have an expectation that I was going to be forced to rush through it. Working for free at my age is a difficult, it’s a blow to my self-esteem and my ego to feel like I don’t have it together. Other LLLT students are experiencing their own struggle, the burden that it is placed on students is unfair and needs to be addressed.
4. Why is the supreme court being so sneaky about it? Practically overnight they decided to get rid of the program. They made false allegations as to the reasons why the program is going to be sunset, with no actual data to back it up. While the public lacks awareness, those who decided to Sunset the program are doing so in a sneaky, and unethical manner. When looking at a business of any type, there’s one thing in common, there are stakeholders. All stakeholders need to be involved when major business decisions are to be made. The students are the stakeholders, the public, The community, the attorneys, the past, the present, and the future clients in family law matters here in Washington state.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Erin Bersch](#)

Erin Bersch

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 8:17am

Sorry for the typos, was using my phone while traveling.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion GAIL M SPURRIER](#)

GAIL M SPURRIER

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 7:52pm

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- Hi Erin,

I am freaked out. That this can happen in the manner it did, is so wrong. What in the world is happening? Is there no value in integrity anymore? Certainly, the State Supreme court showed us how little they value justice and the law, with the sunseting of LLLT. The fact that the same day they ended LLLT, they provide a letter to their justices and the entire legal community, recommitting to their efforts at ending systemic racism. I go from feeling angry, to being sad. My level of frustration has skyrocketed according to my blood pressure. It really pisses me off that 7 people can jeopardize the integrity binding the court to do what is safe, what is right, for usl all. The hypocrisy and sacrifice has hurt everyone, not only the LLLT program.

I pray you achieve your goals...and I wish I could alleviate your stresses. I admire you efforts. I believe you will succeed and as a result of your sacrifices can and will better serve humanity. Keep your chin up.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Amber Vanderheyden](#)

Amber Vanderheyden (She/Her)

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 2:15pm

- The LLLT program should not be discontinued because it was providing a reasonable alternative to those who could not afford legal help.

One of the reasons argued that it should be discontinued was that it was "costing too much money."

Another reason against the program was that is was taking away work from lawyers.

A third reason stated for the discontinuation of the program was concern that it would "damage the integrity of the profession."

In my opinion, I would like to see the program continue. As someone who has been through and is still continuing to go through some family law matters, a more affordable way would be most welcome. Also, I possibly would have liked to go that direction with my career had I came into this program earlier.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Aiden Gibson](#)

Aiden Gibson

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 4:10pm

- I believe the License legal technician program should still stay in effect as it allowed people who wished to practice some form of law but who may not have had the money for law school to be able to practice and work on beginning their career in law. The program also allowed more people to be legally represented; It did not discourage people from seeking lawyers or negatively impacted lawyers but instead allowed more people to be able to seek legal guidance. Stopping the program will negatively effect students who have recently began going through the program who will only have their time and money both wasted, unless they are the lucky ones who decided to start going through the sooner. Ending the program will ultimately give the people of Washington less affordable legal assistance, destroying the goal of the program all together.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion JOSHUA S JONSON](#)

JOSHUA S JONSON

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 5:13pm

When doing research about LLLT program I did my best to approach it in a indifferent manner, even though I personally saw no reason why the program should be sunset given its usefulness in providing career opportunities for those interested in the legal field. This is the first reason why I

think the LLLT program shouldn't be sunset, it provided access to a career field for people who might otherwise not be able to afford education. Secondly, it also sought to expand the amount of legal assistance that can be provided to citizens as in 2012 when the program was started that was an issue that faced some citizens of Washington State. Another benefit of the LLLT program is its more focus and hands on approach to making sure people are trained to provide sound legal assistance. The requirement for having 1500 hours working as a paralegal or legal assistant before you can be licensed as a LLLT helps ensure the quality of the help they are able to provide. On the other hand however, while those were the stated goals of the LLLT program it suffered from low participation, while still costing the WSBA \$1.3 million in administration costs. Even if the goals of the LLLT program were beneficial there were still some gateways that restricted access and contributed to the low participation.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Lucas Hudson](#)

Lucas Hudson

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 9:33pm

• •

Nice post, its unfortunate that a program so helpful ended up having a low participation.

and 1.3 Million for the program yearly is not cheap, however the program should make up for any initial financial loss in the long run by providing the majority of people with affordable civil legal care, doing so can keep people who are struggling with money away from all the things that come with running out of money, without having to explain i think we can understand how that would hurt both them and the state in the long run, that assumption may be a stretch, but hopefully we wont have to find out what would happen if the LLLT program was sunset.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion GAIL M SPURRIER](#)

GAIL M SPURRIER

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 5:21pm

- Discuss with your classmates at least 4 reasons why the LLLT program should or should not be sunset (discontinued).

1 Legal help and justice needs to be accessible to all, not only to those who can afford an attorney. This Court's own Civil Needs Study, 2003, confirmed the great majority of those living in our state cannot afford any type of legal service. It is certain this majority has increased.

2.LLLTs are held to stringent standards, a demanding curriculum, 1,500 hours of practice in family law, supervised by an onsite attorney, and other rigorous requirements. This provides a unique and obvious advantage of a solid understanding and knowledge of Family Law situations. The level of integrity to be held by LLLTs is honored and respected by each participant.

3. This program can help broaden a firm's practice. The need for affordable legal assistance is at its greatest. When employed at a Law Firm, the LLLT will undoubtedly increase the firm's client base.

4. LLLTs can help to reduce the burden on the courts by reducing the number of appearances by pro se.

Now that I have provided the 4 reasons LLLTs should not be sunset, I cannot help but address the manner in which this was decided by the highest court in the state. That this program was not viewed with the regard and respect it deserves.

According to Justice Madsen's letter of dissent, a brief unscheduled meeting, held behind closed doors, without process, without questions or comments, and without public input, based solely upon the WSBA's Board of Governors' reason of elimination of the program is it is too expensive to maintain, even though that cost is less than 1 percent of the WSBA's budget. Justice Madsen said in her letter "I find the ...cost rationale a hollow one", and "...As a fiscal matter, the silence on this point speaks loudly, as does the lack of deliberation on other options to address concerns expressed by the Bar while maintaining this professional license and the valuable services it provides the pursuit of access to justice.

I guess what bothers me the most is the blatant hypocrisy displayed by the seven justices of the Supreme court. Those seven who voted to sunset LLLT on June 4, 2020, also authored and signed a letter on that very same day, June 4, 2020. In part their letter states:

"The devaluation and degradation of black lives is not a recent event. It is a persistent and systemic injustice that predates this nation's founding. But recent events have brought to the forefront of our collective consciousness a painful fact that is, for too many of our citizens, common knowledge: the injustices faced by black Americans are not relics of the

past...examining the plague of systemic racism, accepting the role judges and the legal community at large have played in maintaining this reality, and "recommitted our efforts to ending racial disparity in our governmental, community and social institutions."

"...We go by the title of "Justice" and we reaffirm our deepest level of commitment to achieving justice by ending racism. We urge you to join us in these efforts. This is our moral imperative."

These justices, in their letter dated June 4, 2020, recommitted their efforts in providing equal justice, yet, on that same day, denies that "recommitment" by ending the real and viable solution offered by LLLTs. When coupled with the fact the vote was held behind closed doors, without opportunity to present the side of LLLTs showing the justices how the LLLT benefits all whom are on the side of Justice, I am, deeply concerned that our highest court sacrificed their integrity and more importantly the integrity of this Court. I come away being angry that they dare cost our state, and us, our integrity. To me this whole process, or lack thereof, wreaks of something foul.

Edited by [GAIL M SPURRIER](#) on Jan 31 at 7:30pm
[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Lucas Hudson](#)

Lucas Hudson

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 9:23pm

- here are 4 good reasons the LLLT program should not be sunset.
 1. will take away the ability for many Washingtonians to afford civil legal care.
 2. over 275 students will lose the ability to receive their LLLT after putting in countless hours of work as well as thousands of dollars.
 3. Teachers hired by any of the 7 Community Colleges who offer the LLLT, will lose their job.
 4. As Stated in the LLLT board to WA supreme court document, under title IV, Colleges should give ample amounts of time for students in a given program to finish before a program is sunset.

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[Collapse Subdiscussion JESSE M HULETT](#)

JESSE M HULETT

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 9:35pm

There is a multitude of reasons why the "sunsetting" of the LLLT program should be reversed, but the four most relevant reasons in my opinion are:

- 1) The high need for affordable legal help. Washington State is in a high demand for family law attorneys as it is, and with the sunsetting of this program, it just makes the access to justice gap even larger.
- 2) It reduces the opportunity for legal help for low income clients who still may need legal assistance. This takes a step backward for equitable justice.
- 3) The legal community has a responsibility/obligation to address the growing and persistent issue of the justice gap.
- 4) The cost to the court system when clients are pro se and do not know/understand the process. They may come into court unprepared, and the judge often has to waste the courts time by explaining what they need to do to proceed further. This oftentimes is a waste of money as well as a drain on resources and court availability to other individuals trying to get into court. This issue will only grow exponentially after the already bogged down court system opens back up, and all of the new Covid-19 era cases come to light.

Those four reasons, along with my own personal reasons... I started school at WCC in January of 2020 with my goal being obtaining my LLLT license. I injured myself at work in 2018 and was taken completely out of that industry of work for good. I was then recommend for the L&I retraining program. My academic advisor, my vocational counselor, and I spent a long time discussing what I was going to do (because I had no clue) and a lot of testing me to see what I would be good at. We came up with a plan of me getting my paralegal degree at WCC and furthering it with the LLLT license. The vocational counselor described it as the future of law and it sounded really interesting. That was my goal. I was well into a quarter of the way into the program when it was announced the program would no longer be an option for me. We had a plan. The state (L&I) already invested in me with that plan. Now what?

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[Collapse Subdiscussion NICHOLE L MACMILLAN](#)

NICHOLE L MACMILLAN

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 11:38pm

- Hi Jesse!

I absolutely love that you brought up pro se clients. This is an angle I hadn't even thought of, and I wish I had. You're 100% right in regards to this, pro se clients ultimately waste a lot of precious court time and resources. The old adage of, "those who represent themselves, have a fool for a client." wasn't established for nothing. It's exemplified even more so now that LLLTs will basically become nonexistent once again.

Although my situation is nowhere near yours, I also planned on getting my PS associates then returning for the LLLT license. I wish you the best of luck in finding your path after gaining your Paralegal associates. The, "future of law," resides not in a specific career path, but what you do with the knowledge of the law. I'm sure with as much passion you have, you will find a way to establish a fulfilling career in no time!

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Shana Stewart](#)

Shana Stewart

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 11:49pm

- •

Good Evening Jesse,

I agree that the court system can save itself time with the Pro Se representations. A judge cannot practice law from the bench, but I have seen it done and done with a look of regret to the Pro Se. I think that this aspect would be one that motivate a judge to want to NOT see the program sunseting. I would be curious to know what a pole of judges who have ruled on a LLLT case would say about the LLLT performance vs Pro Se vs Lawyer representation.

Shana

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Carey Gardner](#)

Carey Gardner

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 9:47pm

I do not believe the LLLT program should be sunset. The program was not given enough time to prove or disprove its effectiveness. Also, people without financial means need to have the ability to access affordable pathways to legally protect their familial rights. This program made justice affordable to people who were otherwise without the ability to defend themselves and their families. This program also empowered socially minded individuals a way to be of use without incurring hundreds of thousands of dollars of student debt. Furthermore, I think the real motivation of people arguing against the program was self serving. Attorneys don't want the competition, particularly when the competition is 'underbidding'.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion NICHOLE L MACMILLAN](#)

NICHOLE L MACMILLAN

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 11:16pm

- •

Hi Carey,

I 100% agree with your post! I especially love the way you stated: *"This program also empowered socially minded individuals a way to be of use without incurring hundreds of thousands of dollars of student debt."* As someone who was considering this career a year before it was sunset, I'm deeply saddened by the fact the opportunity to grow in this sector is now essentially out of reach because it's so costly. Hopefully, one day we can get some forward thinking Supreme Court members (and attorneys to back the idea) on the board and get this reversed! :)

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion NICHOLE L MACMILLAN](#)

NICHOLE L MACMILLAN

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 11:12pm

- The sunset of the LLLT program is such an unforeseen event, and unfortunately will be a shaping moment in the history of the legal sector.

The primary reason the LLLT program shouldn't be sunset is due to the fact it bridged the gap for those unable to afford typical legal council. The LLLT was invented as a way to fulfill the needs of unmet legal cases, particularly those avoided due to a lower income status. In essence, they were envisioned to be a civil law variant of a public defender. Now, with the program cut short the access to justice is once again stifled.

Another glaring problem with the sunset of the program is that it wasn't granted enough time in order to establish a solid demand. The program was ratified by the Supreme Court in 2012, the program was established in 2013. Meaning the 1st LLLT's were emerging into the field around 2016 and just barely establishing their practices. Unfortunately just eight years later in 2021 the program was sunset. Ultimately, providing little, if any, evidence for a public demand. Moreover, there were only a handful of schools who offered the program. As such, it was hard to spread the word of this new found career pathway.

Next, during the sunset it was briefly mentioned that a LLLT would be unable to make a livable wage. To begin, it is common knowledge to those in the legal sector that you cannot discuss how much you're earning within your practice. So, LLLT's by law could not share or establish a baseline for this information. However, LLLT's inherently run their own practice, and as such can work as much as they'd like; ultimately this proves that LLLT's would be able to sustain themselves.

Lastly if nothing else, it removed countless numbers of jobs that enabled individuals who may be too afraid, or simply unable, to attain their Juris Doctorate and become a licensed attorney. This career path was incredibly designed, as it enabled legal assistants the ability to further their education and thrive in the legal sector. It is such a missed opportunity, especially now that those individuals already in the pipeline must hastily finish their degree as opposed to gradually cultivating their love for law.

As someone who wanted to pursue this career, I'm deeply saddened that our options are now limited due to a rash decision. Hopefully, one day it will be overturned and the career path will be reignited.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Thomas Soles](#)

[Thomas Soles \(He/Him\)](#)

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 11:35pm

- One of the reasons why should not be sunset are the fact that it can give people who want to be lawyers early experience practicing law and could be useful for them. But, the main reasons why it should not be sunset are that for one, it would mean more people practicing family law and would mean that it would be easier to find someone to take your case. Another reason, and this is a fairly big one, is that it would mean easier access to help if you were lower income and could

not afford a lawyer who could help you as it's likely that an LLLT would not charge a client as much.

The only reason I can think of in support of it being sunset is that, as far as I could find, there aren't very many LLLTs in Washington. Granted the number that I was able to find is from 2017 and there might be more of them now. But, according to the website that I found there were only 20 LLLTs as of 2017. But even if there were only 5, I don't think it should be sunset so long as they were helping people.

(<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiZirz wk8juAhWIFTQIHb4vBX8QFjACegQIBRAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.okbar.org%2Fbarjournal%2Fapr2017%2Fobj8811speck%2F%23%3A~%3Atext%3DThere%2520were%252C%2520as%2520of%2520March%2C3.&usg=AOvVaw3c3A4FdixBQLU00Kr1m-Xa> (Links to an external site.)) This link is the source where I found the number of LLLTs as of 2017.

[Reply Reply to Comment](#)

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[Collapse Subdiscussion Shana Stewart](#)

Shana Stewart

Jan 31, 2021 Jan 31 at 11:41pm

Good Evening everyone,

I am in the pipeline to become a LLLT. I have much to say about this sunseting and none of it is pro sunseting.

Reasons that I feel the LLLT program should NOT be sunset are as follows:

* Reason #1- Easier availability to obtain the knowledge and help of a LLLT professional - The LLLT in my view is the aspiring lawyer/attorney, that for whatever reason, is not a lawyer/attorney. They have the drive of the lawyer/attorney and will give that 110% to achieve success for their clients. What is the last thing any lawyer/attorney wants to be battling besides a great lawyer/attorney ?? A spitfire LLLT with something to prove. What is the first thing a client needs an LLLT to be? A spitfire with something to prove. Seems like a conflict exists. The LLLT was created to help the client obtain services faster and cheaper and that need still exists, and I would say more so now, than when the program was created due to the pandemic. Wouldn't that just be awesome to have in every county, available to those that cannot afford a

lawyer/attorney's services, a spitfire LLLT that can help them navigate their issues through the court system and be able to get that win?

* Reason #2- The program was not expanding in my opinion because there were not enough schools approved to administer the curriculum. I live in Cowlitz Co, in Longview, Wa. Pre Pandemic the closest school to take any classes was Tacoma. This was going to be 1 hr and 45 min drive for me. Who has that amount of time if they are working full time, part time or do not have the money or reliable vehicle to make that long drive? Not many that do not live within 45 mins of the WSBA curriculum administering approved college. Expanding the colleges that could teach this certification program is vital to sustaining it not to mention allowing the progra to be continually taught as an online course. The pandemic and all online administration taught the WSBA that the model now does exist and recruited a huge cohort!

* Reason #3- The data has not been studied and presented accurately or even at all to the Court. There needs to be more data collection and proof to sunset than what took place, without public comment. I feel the data provided would be eye opening. How much per hour is being charged, who they are serving, who won the case?

* Reason #4- Other states took Washington's model and are doing wonderful things with it. Why, all of the sudden when the pandemic hit, among the busiest time for lawyers, is Washington trying to shut it down, if the model is taking off in other states and for that matter expanding?

For this reason is why I feel that sunseting the program will be a loss. Also this adding in all this new verbiage and restrictions that involve not reinstating a LLLT as you can a lawyer seems like a way to stomp out any existing LLLT's.

Shana

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Shalom!

I am attaching a very enlightening discussion by my fellow paralegal & LLLT students. I hope your hearts and minds are open to hear what we have to say.

Thank you for your time,

Cynthia "Synth" Surber

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