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From: o Humphrey [<mailto:ojh3@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Sunday, April 18, 2021 12:45 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Elimination of LLLT License

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April 18, 2021

Dear Justices,

I practiced law in Washington State for 31 years before I retired at the end of 2000. Through out my career I was concerned about the affordability of legal services. Attorneys fees then and now are exorbitant, even for people who can afford them. For most citizens, legal services are too expensive to even pay on credit, and the retainer requests and hourly rates charged are so intimidating that necessary legal assistance or even brief advice, I am sure, is simply not obtained.

When I practiced, I always was conscious about the cost of my services and the impact on the budgets of my clients. Consequently, I very occasionally only increased my hourly rate by a cost of living adjustment; I billed on the tenth rather than a quarter of an hour; I did not charge for photo copies or faxes; and I only asked for small retainers. I often cut or waived fee balances when fees crept up more than could be controlled. I also provided services pro bono, and, in my early years, worked for legal aid doing criminal defense. And, for four years I was the provider attorney in the State for a national company providing discounted legal representation.

While many attorneys are concerned about the affordability of legal services, too few do anything about it. If a person cannot pay a big retainer and an hourly rate in the hundreds of dollars, legal assistance is not available. This is probably true for the vast majority of our population.

Paralegals and the LLLT program are the only way to make more affordable legal assistance available. With proper training, licensing, and supervision, these para-professionals must be an integral party of our legal system. Our legal profession has always been too slow to embrace efforts to expand the availability of legal assistance, even for uncontested or routine matters.

For centuries, the legal profession has had a public relations problem, perceived as agents of the rich and powerful who alone can afford a attorney. In 1591, one of the characters in William Shakespeare's Henry VI, part 2, suggested that one way to improve the country was, "Let's kill all the attorneys."

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