ATTN: Washington State Supreme Court Justices

Re: *Sunsetting of LLLT License (APR 28)*

Your Honors,

We write to object to the Supreme Court's decision to sunset the LLLT license. As future attorneys, we recognize that to address the needs in our community for fair representation in civil legal matters, a break from the traditional mold of "legal professional" may be required. We support the important role and positive impact that LLLTs play to help bridge the gap in access to justice for those who have lower to middle incomes, who cannot afford the cost of an attorney.

The removal of this license is a direct contradiction to the Court's recent public statements to address "systemic inequities" in the judicial system. Lack of access to justice disproportionately affects minorities. While minorities represent only 18% of Washington State's population, they comprise 32% of the poverty population. The decision by the Court to remove an opportunity for the public to access affordable legal services is in stark contrast to the letter from the Court on June 4, 2020 addressing racial inequities in the judicial system. In that letter, you stated,

> "As lawyers and members of the bar, we must recognize the harms that are caused when meritorious claims go unaddressed due to systemic inequities or the lack of financial, personal, or systemic support…Too often in the legal profession, we feel bound by tradition and the way things have 'always' been. We must remember that even the most venerable precedent must be struck down when it is incorrect and harmful."

In a perfect world, every litigant in a civil case would have access to an attorney. Unfortunately, the number of attorneys entering retirement age is growing while law school attendance shrinks. The LLLT licensing process and requirements are robust, which ensures the public will receive quality services within the scope of the license. The cost to administer the program is less than 1% of the WSBA budget and there are nearly 275 individuals in various stages of the licensure process. These facts contradict claims that the program is too expensive to sustain and there is lack of interest from the public. This program has the potential to reach thousands of Washingtonians in need, especially if the scope of practice was broadened to other fields of law such as landlord/tenant or consumer protection, two areas that are of great need in the midst of COVID-19.

It is time for us to break away from "the way things have 'always' been" and reestablish and broaden this program to address the income inequality in the courtroom. Already, several other states are moving forward with similar licenses while we regress. If we truly want to combat inequality in the judicial system, we should not take away resources for affordable legal help. It is time to support our words with actions to bring about real change. We respectfully request that you reconsider and reverse your decision to sunset the LLLT program. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Seattle University Womxn's Law Caucus
Gideon's Army – Future Public Defenders
The Non-Binary, Gender Non-Conforming, and Allies Student Association of Seattle University School of Law
Devin Pearsall, 3L Graduating 2021

Sydney Lopes, 1L Graduating 2023
Nicole Rudnicki, 1L Graduating 2023
Emily Michelbrink, 2L Graduating 2023
Olivia Shangrow, 1L Graduating 2023
Elaine Kissel, 3L Graduating 2021
Angie Weiss, 3L Graduating 2021
Marguerite Dennis, 3L Graduating 2021
Tamara Garrison, 2L Graduating 2022
Lindsey Franklin, 2L Graduating 2022
Laurel Brown, 3L Graduating 2021
Jessamine Anderson, 1L Graduating 2023
Hallie Campbell-Roos, 2L Graduating 2023
Liz McDonald, 2L Graduating 2023
Mariana Molina Beltran, 2L Graduating 2022
Samantha Lyons, 2L Graduating 2022
Jennifer Dana-Farley, 1L Graduating 2023
Jay Conrad, 1L Graduating 2023
Jewel Shrout, 2L Graduating 2023
Michelle Kang, 2L Graduating 2022
Lyndsey Davidson, 2L Graduating 2023
Stephanie Chavez, 1L Graduating 2023
Zoey Jordan Salsbury, 2L Graduating 2022
Anthony Rychkov, 1L Graduating 2023
Katie Dimsho, 2L Graduating 2022
Meghan Ricci, 2L Graduating 2022
Hannah Bartow, 2L Graduating 2023
Geneva Sherman, 1L Graduating 2023
Heather Shutter, 2L Graduating 2022
Patreece Spence, 1L Graduating 2023
Peyton Jacobsen, 2L Graduating 2022
Kendra Johnson, 1L Graduating 2024
Tiah Johnson, 2L Graduating 2022
Amy Peterson, 2L Graduating 2023
Chloe Merino, 2L Graduating 2022
Madison Moreno, 2L Graduating 2022
Maggie Hannon, 2L Graduating 2022
Angela Little, 2L Graduating 2023
Upama KC, 2L Graduating 2022
Haley Hargreaves, 2L Graduating 2022
Julissa Rachor, 2L Graduating 2022
Christopher Giadrosich, 3L Graduating 2021
Livio De La Cruz, 2L Graduating 2022
Carsen Nies, 2L Graduating 2022
Ishita Ghosh, LLM Graduating 2022
Diana DeForest, 1L Graduating 2024
Kristin DiBiase, J.D.
Clay Wilson, J.D.

From: Garrison, Tamara [mailto:tgarrison@seattleu.edu]
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2021 10:20 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Revision of APR 28 - Sunsetting of LLLT License

Please see the attached letter regarding the Supreme Court's revision of APR 28. Please forward to the Justices for review during the comment period. Thank you for your assistance.

Tamara Garrison
JD Candidate '22
SU Womxn's Law Caucus VP of Campus Relations

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