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**From:** Knightlinger, Stephanie [mailto:Stephanie.Knightlinger@kingcounty.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 30, 2021 4:29 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** Comment Opposing CrR 3.4

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Good afternoon,

I write in opposition to the proposed Criminal Rule 3.4 changes to allow a defendant to appear for *all* hearings in a criminal case via a remote video connections. Remote access for parties is important and vital for some hearings, particularly out-of-custody arraignment hearings or status hearings. However, the Courts should not allow remote appearance for trials, pleas, or testimonial hearings as the default. As a criminal prosecutor for 13 years, I have had defendants convicted at trial and then abscond for months requiring many resources and renewed trauma for victims when the convicted defendant did not appear to serve his sentence. The likelihood of flight if a defendant appears remotely seems to increase exponentially as they would be observing via computer or phone for their own trial or sentencing hearing. This will do a great disservice to courts, victims, the public and defendants as it will likely require repeated scheduling of hearings, the expense of law enforcement attempting to locate defendants, make it far more difficult to collect fingerprints to prove later ID for a conviction from an earlier felony sentencing, to collect DNA from a sentenced defendant on a first time felony conviction, and exposes victims or the public to the ability of others to remotely record or screenshot video proceedings from trial testimony or victim statements at sentencing. These are all examples of difficulties that we have had in the current system of appearing in person.

Please do not adopt these changes to CrR 3.4. Many things are still required to be done in person, such as a dentist appointment which could never be meaningfully done via remote video appearance, a defendant should appear in person for a criminal trial, felony plea hearing, or a sentencing.

Stephanie Knightlinger (she/her)

