

Your Honors:

2/27/2022

My name is Jim Bloss and I'm the father of a 42-year-old son living with severe mental illness - I'm writing you in support of "maintaining"/keep the current rule" of the original change to CrR 3.4 and CrRLJ 3.4, allowing defendants to appear in court through their attorneys for some of the hearings they were originally required to attend in person. Given I'm only allowed 1,500 words in my written statement I am volunteering to "stand tall" in your Courtroom and give verbal testimony in this regard, should you so allow - The written word cannot even come near describing the incredible mental and emotional price that my son and others living with severe mental illness and related disabilities have to pay when subjected to a court experience.

As I understand it there is a request in your court to roll back this change as far as relates to misdemeanors - and I can only tell you that "any" court appearances by this population have the effect of what I mention, above, and shows total ignorance on the part of those that believe that there are "any" positive benefits of these appearances; certainly vice the human, psychological and emotional negatives that truly obtain under these circumstances. I'm not a mental or behavioral health professional but any clinical psychologist and/or psychiatrist will tell you the terrible consequences of a courtroom experience on this population; this experience and this population not cut much slack by our current justice system in Washington State which allows a broad range, depth and breadth, of prosecutorial discretion and little recognition by the Courts of the impacts on behavior due to mental illness and/or chemical dependency.

Our story: My son, Frank, living with a severe mental illness, had not been taking his medications (he believed they were poison) and ended up incurring a traffic violation which resulted in a police chase which involved felony charges (the County Prosecutor would not reduce the charges to a lesser level - e.g., gross misdemeanor), Superior Court appearances, six of those appearances in court due to various delays, most of them having to do with court processes and availabilities of court officials - each of these

appearances of course mandated for attendance by my son - with the possibility of a court order/warrant being issued for non-appearance. My wife and I, supporting our son, had to work very hard for each one of these appearances to ensure that my son would actually "show" for these court appearances - each one of them, given his mental state, involving great stress, anxiety and very likely triggering his mental need for "cutting and running", not uncommon for people living with this level of mental illness. The argument by a Prosecutor about defendants not taking their situation seriously if they don't show for every hearing flies against the reality of the instinctive "fly or fight" emotion that is naturally occurring with this population - Consequences (warrants, etc.) do "not" mean anything to someone who is severely mentally ill - the hammer/stick approach that is the standard in these instances does nothing positive in the way of "teaching" a defendant "not to do something like this again" - indeed, one might argue that our justice system does not recognize the basic human right of the need for survival which is activated under these circumstances for this population and which the defendant has to overcome in order to make court appearances. I have been amazed at the force of will that my son had during these experiences to show up at court - His actions have led me to see him as "my hero" for what he had to endure, not just for appearing for each hearing but eventually showing up for a full-up jury trial which he somehow found the will to suffer thru -

Please, your Honors, please support "not" making these requested changes to the current policies.

Thank you on behalf of Frank and the many others like him who will benefit (and surely "have" benefited) from the rules as they stand.

Jim Bloss/Monroe, WA.

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From: Magda Baker [mailto:Magda@defensenet.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 1, 2022 8:38 AM
To: Jim Bloss <jbloss132@gmail.com>
Cc: lcblossoms@gmail.com; schildek@gmail.com; schwarz.jason@gmail.com; OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
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Hello Clerk of the Supreme Court,

The February 27, 2022 email from Jim Bloss below includes a link to a Google Document containing Mr. Bloss' comment opposing proposed changes to CrRLJ 3.4. I got in touch with Mr. Bloss because he cc'd me on his February 27 email, and I was concerned the Court might not access his Google Document due to security concerns. Attached is the document Mr. Bloss sent a link to. I hope you can accept Mr. Bloss' comment on the pending proposal to change CrRLJ 3.4 since he contacted the Court before the February 28 comment deadline.

Thank you for your consideration.

Magda Baker
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From: Jim Bloss (via Google Docs) <jbloss132@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 27, 2022 1:37 PM
To: Magda Baker <Magda@defensenet.org>
Cc: lcblossoms@gmail.com; schildek@gmail.com; schwarz.jason@gmail.com;

supreme@courts.wa.gov

Subject: Document shared with you: "Your Honors:"

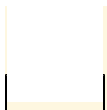
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