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Clerk of the Supreme Court
P.O. Box 40929,
Olympia, WA 98504-0929,

By Email only to: supreme@courts.wa.gov.

RE: Proposed Amendments to GR 23

Dear Clerk of the Supreme Court:

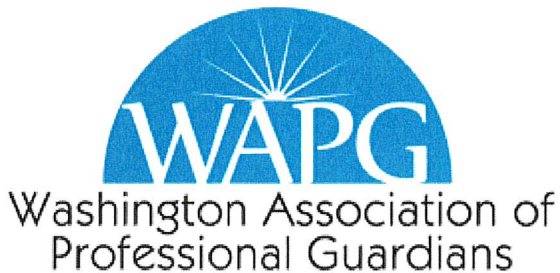
The Washington Association of Professional Guardians (WAPG) represents approximately 90 Certified Professional Guardians practicing in Washington State. WAPG writes in support of Deborah Jameson's suggested Amendments to GR 23 which were approved for publication by the Supreme Court in Order No. 25700-A-1379.

Change to the Number of Certified Professional Guardians on the Board.

WAPG supports removing the restriction on how many certified professional guardians may serve on the Certified Professional Guardian and Conservator Board (CPGCB). As noted in Ms. Jameson's letter, certification for Professional Guardians has been required for over 20 years. Many of those directly involved in creating the CPGCB were themselves practicing guardians and supported the creation of the CPGCB. WAPG and other organizations whose members are professional guardians provide the bulk of approved training courses required for professional guardians to maintain their certifications. A significant number of practicing certified guardians have far more extensive experience in the actual administration of guardianship and conservatorships than a majority of the current members of the CPGCB.

In order to become a certified professional guardian, one must have relevant experience in guardianships or related fields. As a result, many certified professional guardians are not only experienced in guardianships and conservatorship, but they are also often highly educated licensed professionals whose backgrounds include: law, nursing, social work, mental health, geriatric health, developmental disabilities, and the complex world of social services.

We are proud to serve as certified professional guardians in Washington State because we, as a State and a profession, have adopted some of the most progressive statutes and rules governing the administration of guardianships and conservatorships. It has become a highly specialized profession and, as a result, many of those connected with guardianships who are not certified as professional guardians have little understanding and/or practical experience with



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the actual responsibilities of being a professional guardian, including a majority of the current members of the CPGCB.

We as professional guardians and as an organization take considerable pride in providing the highest quality of service and fiduciary responsibilities to the population we serve. Given the not-too-uncommon negative impression about guardianships as a societal institution, the professional guardian has a great deal to gain by seeing the profession practiced with the highest degree of ability and integrity.

Unfortunately, even with this vast and relevant knowledge, certified professional guardians represent a minority membership on the very board that regulates the profession. Indeed, as Ms. Jameson points out, even those well qualified to serve on the board are actually excluded under the present rules simply by virtue of being a certified professional guardian. It is difficult to see how such a limiting rule benefits the profession as a whole and the vulnerable population we serve.

GR 23 should be amended to remove the restriction on the number of certified professional guardians allowed to serve on the CPGCB allowing the profession to join a majority of similar highly specialized professions around the county which are permitted to be involved in the regulation of their profession.

Open Meeting Rules.

As noted above, WAPG and other organizations are responsible for planning and administering educational seminars approved by the CPGCB and required for certified professional guardians to maintain their certifications. Over the years, members of WAPG's executive board have been directly involved as instructors in the University of Washington's Training Program which is a required prerequisite to becoming a certified professional guardian in Washington. In spite of this level of experience and knowledge, in private Executive Session proceedings, the educational committee of the CPGCB discussed the creation of an alternate training program to cover the UW hiatus year while it revised its curriculum to the newly implemented Uniform Guardianship, Conservatorship, and other Protective Arrangements Act (UGA). Only the final or confirming vote was done before the public.

As noted in Ms. Jameson's letter, the CPGCB has taken the position that committee recommendations are discussed in Executive Session because the discussions are preliminary. However, this position overlooks the likelihood that such discussions have a significant impact on the creation of programs and the decisions of the board without the benefit of input from the public, placing the public in the challenging position of having to overcome the conclusions that



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may have been formed by the board with limited debate and discussion and whose minutes and notes remain secret. Such a result could not possibly be in the public's best interest.

As a public agency and State board created by, or pursuant to statute, and not constituting a court or the state legislature, the CPGCB clearly falls within the definition of an agency subject to the requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act. Beyond that, the integrity of such a board that regulates the livelihood of professional guardians demands that the debate over decisions affecting the whole of the profession be made available to those who are regulated. As noted above, the collective experience of those who are regulated far exceeds the practical experience of the current regulating body. It seems beyond question that engaging this group of professionals on the Certified Professional Guardianship and Conservatorship Board would be nothing other than beneficial to the profession.

WAPG supports the notion that all the CPGCB's discussions should be public unless some confidentiality is required, as might be the case with application or disciplinary matters.

Washington Association of Professional Guardians

Mark C. Vohr, President.

Endorsed by:

Gary Beagle, NMG, CPG, OFPC, CPG Board member from 2007 to 2016, WAPG Past President.

Michael J. Longyear, JD, CPG and CPG Board member from 2001-2008.

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Linford, Tera](#)
Subject: FW: Washington Association of Professional Guardians Comments to Proposed Revisions to GR 23
Date: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 2:19:37 PM
Attachments: [2022-02-23 ct Clerk of Supreme Court RE GR 23.pdf](#)

From: Mark Vohr [mailto:mcv@ohanafc.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 2:19 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Washington Association of Professional Guardians Comments to Proposed Revisions to GR 23

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Please see attached correspondence.

Regards,

Mark

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