



SPOKANE COUNTY JUVENILE COURT Superior Court

902 N Adams Street
Spokane, WA 99260

Phone: (509) 477-4742
Fax: (509) 477-6460

April 27, 2023

Erin L. Lennon, Clerk of the Supreme Court
Attn: Supreme Court Rules Committee

RE: JuCR 7.16

As the Director of Spokane County Juvenile Court Services, and as the current president of the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA), I am writing to encourage the ***State Supreme Court to rescind JuCR 7.16, or as an alternative adopt the suggested amendments.***

In my 30+ career with Spokane County Juvenile Court Services, I have witnessed numerous positive impacts of system reform initiated by Juvenile Court Administrators. For example, working with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP), we developed and implemented a standardized risk/needs assessment, Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT), and evidenced- based programing, as well as the standardized Case Management Assessment Process (CMAP) based on research and focusing on Risk/Needs/Responsivity, all of which research has determined is the gold standard of case management.

Since the creation and implementation of PACT and CMAP, WAJCA has continuously advocated for continued research to enhance services provided to our youth and families. We have instituted some highly structured Quality Assurance measures to assure model fidelity and standardization across the state, something not required in many community programs, as seen in this article.

https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.kuow.org%2fstories%2fking-county-gave-millions-to-no-new-youth-jail-activists-to-help-kids-then-they-looked-away%3fpreview%3dtrue&c=E,1,Y8Y-EuUPGfZRabgCC2FD9qK0srFzvYjRQpeHDwhykOAMfKUdQPk7okMKV2opeWeniS00DjALK38DvonOmJWSfchLQUttuBNjRY_bz2JRXtMwww,,&typo=1

Simply put, Washington State juvenile justice is a national leader in seeking innovative and research-based methods to work with youth. We too believe in keeping kids out of the system whenever possible. In fact, based on data from the Washington State Center for Court Research, there are nearly 70% fewer youth on probation today than ten years ago and a near 74% reduction in detention admissions since 2016 in our county detention centers.

However, a serious question remains; what do we do when the youth refuse to participate? These youth are often running away from home, living on the streets, using drugs, being trafficked, and sometimes acting out violently. Many are transient and refuse to stay in positive placements or engage in services. These youth are certainly at risk of being harmed. The inability of the court to issue a warrant for these youth only exacerbate the problem. JuCR 7.16 eliminates the ability to place these youth in a safe and secure setting, temporally, where they could be provided wrap around services with the goal of positive community connection upon departure.

Simply put, JuCR 7.16 is a big step backwards from the innovative, positive, and research-based work being done by Juvenile Courts across the state over the last 20 years. JuCR 7.16 puts our children in danger and restricts the safeguards and resources that have been built.

To further my point, I am attaching the body of an email that one of our Probation Counselors received from a parent, which glaringly demonstrates the risk JuCr7.16 has put some of our youth and the community in.

Sincerely,

Tori Peterson, Administrator
Spokane County Juvenile Court Services

Attachment: Parent Statement

`Chris,

I'm just writing to you in hopes of coming up with a solution to help A.. I'm getting more and more concerned for her well being. Every time I hear news of what she's been up to, it seems to get worse and worse.

As far as I know, currently, A is living in cars and couch hopping "when they can" with a 42 year old man. One of her siblings recently sent me a picture of her facebook profile picture because it now says she is engaged and we believe it is to this same 42 year old man. Her older sisters tried to lightly steer her in the right direction when she first ran away this last time, however her level of partying, drinking and drug use was so much that they no longer speak to her and she is no longer even welcome at one of their homes at all. We also recently received mail that contained test results saying she has contracted Gonorrhea. I don't want to believe that she is being sex trafficked, the same as she was 4 years ago, but it seems clear to me that it is very likely.

Over the past 4 years she has been on the run more times than I could even tell you and has always been very much at the mercy of her own poor choices, but it has never felt as hopeless as it does now. Not even when we knew for certain that she had in the past been doing Meth. Because in the past we always knew that eventually she would get caught stealing, or Missing from Care locator, Mr. Thompson, would spot her downtown at one of her usual haunts or she would end up in a hospital. Any of which would end up in her being taken into custody because in the past she has always had a warrant, either due to a Youth At Risk or because she was on probation. Once in custody and usually after a few days in juvie, she inevitably would call either myself or her dad or she would talk to a counselor and for a brief moment she would want better for herself. And there was always hope that the thought would stick with her. Now how will that happen? In 4 years she has only ever come home on her own once and I have a hard time believing that she will now.

Mr. Thompson has had contact with her and has even had a pretty good idea where she is on more than one occasion but because she doesn't want to meet with him and doesn't have a warrant, knowing where she is really doesn't do any good. A has even recently been picked up by police for theft at the Casino, as you know, but because the stolen property was located and no charges were pressed, there was no reason to keep her. The tribal police that arrested her told me they found her in the company of a 42 year old man and they even obtained the name of this mysterious 42 year old man, with which A has remained close to for the last few months, but because the police had no reason to keep her in custody, it seems the name of this predator remains anonymous and a thorough report was not even filed?! How on Earth will we ever get help for her?

I truly don't understand how someone with A's history can have her warrant thrown out because "She is not a risk to herself or others?" Maybe she isn't at risk of killing anyone or killing herself on purpose but she is definitely at risk of pretty much everything else you can think of. Not only does she have violent past felonies but A is stealing, driving without a license, drunk driving, doing hard drugs, drinking in excess, being very sexually active with adults and very likely being sex trafficked. How is she not a risk to herself AND others? How is she on probation and allowed to be out doing whatever she wants without consequence? How are there so many people concerned for her well being and no one can do anything to help her because she pretends she doesn't want help. Not only do I fear for her life and her mental stability, but I fear that we are cementing into her mind that she will not ever really be held accountable, that rules and laws don't matter and because of that, this risky lifestyle will continue well into her adulthood.

Time is running out before she turns 18 and I worry it will be even more impossible to help her once she is deemed an adult. If there is any hope left at all, that might bring her into a place of safety and get her away from the people that are encouraging her down this destructive path and probably even victimizing her, I'd love to hear it.

D
(Spokane Parent)

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: JuCR 7.16
Date: Thursday, April 27, 2023 2:28:53 PM
Attachments: [Letter to Supreme Court.doc](#)
[Parent Email.docx](#)

From: Peterson, Tori <TPETERSON@spokanecounty.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2023 2:19 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: JuCR 7.16

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Thank you.

Tori

Tori Peterson, Administrator
Spokane County Juvenile Court
509-477-2406
tpeterson@spokanecounty.org