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Subject: FW: Proposed GR 40 Family Law Trial Rule
Date: Tuesday, June 28, 2022 8:05:09 AM

From: Terry Price [mailto:bht98109@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, June 27, 2022 5:23 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Proposed GR 40 Family Law Trial Rule

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Dear Justices of the Washington Supreme Court:

This comment is in support of proposed revised GR 40, Informal Family Law Trial Rule, that has been posted for comment on the Administrative Office of the Courts' website. Although I have been a family law practitioner and am currently a law school family law professor and a member of the WA Access to Justice Board, the opinions here are mine alone. I support this revised proposed rule for three reasons:

1. According to the Administrative Office of the Courts annual Domestic Relations caseloads, currently only 3-4% of domestic relations matters per year go to trial. However, there are potentially many more cases with self-represented litigants where they likely settled because they were intimidated by the litigation itself. The option to go to a simplified trial rather than settle would give them more choices in the process, and possibly more just outcomes.
2. Thurston County has had very good success with these trials in the last three years, and King County adopted a similar rule last year. Apparently, Clark County also uses a variation of the Informal Domestic Relations Trial rule. These three counties represent almost

40% of the state's population. In other words, this rule is already an option for a large proportion of Washington's population, and it would be fair to bring it to the rest of the state. Also, as noted on the Cover Sheet, our surrounding neighbor states (Oregon, Idaho and Alaska) all have variations of this rule as well.

3. There is no downside. If the parties do not want to avail themselves of the Informal Family Law Trial rule, then they will not. But if they do, then the judges in these matters will have more robust guidance about how to deal with those matters.

The Superior Court Judge's Association has done a fine job editing this Informal Family Law Trial rule after the previous comments were submitted. This rule will go a long way to helping litigants who cannot afford representation to get their fair day in court. I fully support this.

Sincerely, Terry J. Price, MSW, JD