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April 30, 2025

Justices of the Washington Supreme Court
P.O. Box 40929
Olympia, Washington 98504-0929
VIA E-MAIL: Clerk of the Supreme Court <supreme@courts.wa.gov>

RE: Proposed Amendment to RPC 6.1

Dear Justices:

The Pro Bono Council is the convening body of 16 county-based volunteer lawyer programs in Washington State. The vast majority of volunteer pro bono work assisting low-income clients in Washington State is done through our programs, and we provide legal assistance to more than 20,000 low-income clients annually. RPC 6.1 and the associated 50-hour commendation, were designed specifically to support and promote volunteerism with our volunteer lawyer programs and other Qualified Legal Service Providers.¹

While we greatly value the vital, undervalued, and constitutionally necessary work our public defense partners across the state provide, often to a client base that overlaps with our own, we do not support any expansion of the definition of “Pro Bono Publico” at this time.

This amendment seems to entitle many of our staff attorneys to a commendation, which seems wholly inappropriate. If our paid staff doing eviction defense, childhood representation, or similar court appointed work, were to receive a commendation for pro bono publico service, it would certainly draw ire from our regular lawyer volunteers – the very volunteers RPC 6.1 was established to promote.

If we are looking for a small gesture to appreciate the important work of public defenders, a separate commendation for their efforts seems appropriate and we would support such a move. However, we oppose this currently proposed amendment to RPC 6.1. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Washington State Pro Bono Council

¹ QLSPs <https://www.wsba.org/connect-serve/pro-bono-public-service/qlsp-directory>

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Farino, Amber](#)
Cc: [Ward, David](#)
Subject: FW: Comment on Proposed Amendment to RPC 6.1 by Washington Pro Bono Council
Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025 11:02:10 AM
Attachments: [2025.04.30 PBC Letter re Opposition to RPC 6.1 Amendment.pdf](#)

From: Michael Terasaki <michael@probonocouncil.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2025 10:08 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Comment on Proposed Amendment to RPC 6.1 by Washington Pro Bono Council

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Dear Justices and Clerk of the Supreme Court,

Please find attached comment on the proposed amendment to RPC 6.1.

Thank you,
Michael

Michael Terasaki
Pro Bono Council Manager



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