From: Greer, Kelsey <kgreer@kingcounty.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 1:57 PM
To: LR Comments <lrcomments@kingcounty.gov>
Subject: Comment regarding LFLR 12

Good afternoon,

There are several concerns that have arose following the initial issuance of the General Order that introduced many of the amendments that are now being proposed as changes to local court rule LFLR 12. I have provided a bulleted list below to convey all concerns concisely and effectively.

- There is lack of clarity around what "voluminous filings" means and at which point a summary chart is required under **LFLR 12 e(1)(A)**. This also seems to contradict **LFLR 12 e(1)(C)** which indicates there are no limitations for exhibits to declaration if the exhibits relate to supporting the declaration. It is unclear how there can be no limitations to exhibits, however also a rule that at a certain point, exhibits need to be listed in a summary chart for submission; especially if there is a penalty for parties which results in the court deciding not to take submitting exhibits into consideration.
- Another concern with **LFLR 12 e(1)(A)** is what a "chart, summary or calculation" means and how exactly that information should be summarized. Many parties elect to submit screenshots, photos, etc. as independent evidence to support their written statement. A summary is removing that independent confirmation from direct screenshots, photos, etc. and relying on them to know what the court is looking for without any clear direction. Another concern with this requirement is considering the additional barrier this places on limited or non-English speaking parties. These individuals are already at a disadvantage in learning how to navigate a system with a language and culture different from their own. If the court is going to impose rules around the format in which evidence/exhibits are provided **(LFLR 12 e(1)(A); LFLR 12 e(2)(A))** templates should be provided to ensure parties are providing a summary including the information the court is seeking. These templates should also be provided with translation like PO documents provided by AOC. Not only is there a concern for how this rule may negatively impact non or limited-English proficiency parties, but I also see this contributing to prolonging impacts on parties and the court through reissuances to request original copies or increases in Motions for Revision or Reconsideration.

- **In LFLR 12 e(1)(C)**, the first row is confusing. It states "Declaration of a party in support of or opposition to Petition (this may be in addition to the Petition or part of the Petition)" with a max submission of one. Particularly for petitioners, it would be helpful to clarify that this declaration is in addition to the narrative response to the questions in the petition. Many petitioners are seeking emergency protection through these orders and often provide just enough information to meet the filing deadline to get a TPO. It would be helpful to clearly indicate they can provide additional statement pages either at time of filing or after filing.
- I also believe it would be prudent to provide clarity on what the term "exhibits" encompasses. This is very much a court term that many pro se litigants will not understand. I am concerned many, especially those with limited or non-English proficiency will not know that this means evidence nor what that can include.
- **LFLR 12 (f)** is unreasonable and will result in additional barriers and unnecessary fees for parties. This section of the rule is very unclear as to when proposed orders should be provided and what will happen in some of the following instances: A. How will this work with cases that are continued multiple times? B. Are parties only expected to provide proposed orders following the filing of the petition and response? C. Will the court keep track of the proposed order if required to be submitted by parties the one time? If so and the court loses the proposed order copies, will that result in consequences for either party? D. Similarly, what if the proposed order is lost in the mail?

If the court chooses to proceed with this rule, there needs to be much greater clarity. There should also be the consideration of incorporating an e-filing option for "Petitioner's Proposed Order" and "Respondent's Proposed Order" in the Clerks e-filing systems. This would be more timely, more efficient and result in less cost/barriers to parties. It also follows a more similar process to Family Law processes which have parties submit Proposed Order/Parenting Plans, etc.

- **For LFLR 12 (g):** How is the court taking parties with language barriers into account with these deadlines? It Is not reasonable or fair to expect a non-English proficient party to be able to file a reply within 2 court days. Parties with language barriers have been negatively impacted by the tight response and reply deadlines. These deadlines do not account for the time needed to locate a bilingual support person to help with translation. For petitioners, many cannot connect with a bilingual advocate within that time let alone be able to complete and file their reply. There has been at least one instance where a petitioner had to be prepared to provide a reply noting they did not have enough time to connect with their bilingual advocate to review and reply to the response.

- **For LFLR 12 (h):** Again, how is the court considering parties with language barriers or disabilities? Is the five minutes for party oral argument only? Does this mean time is paused for interpretation? This again creates a barrier for non or limited English proficiency parties and parties impacted by neuro or speech delays. I recognize the concern the court has around increase caseload and docket sizes, however I do not believe limiting parties' abilities to present their cases having the positive impact the court is assuming. I believe these restrictions not only pose additional barriers to our most disenfranchised populations but will also result in continued negative impacts on the court. I see these limitations resulting in higher rates of re-filings, prolonging of cases due to more reissuances, and/or a higher rate of Motions for Revision and Reconsiderations.

I am inferring that many of these proposed changes are a result of a need to manage increasing court docket volume and calendars running late. I recognize this need; however, I do have concerns of these proposed court rule changes having impacts on parties' rights to receive due process. I am also concerned these proposed court rules contradict the findings in RCW 7.105.900(5) which identified a need to clarify and simplify the statutes to "help to eliminate procedural inconsistencies, modernize practices, provide better access to justice for those most marginalized" and "that these improvements are needed to help ensure that protection orders and corresponding court processes are more easily accessible to all litigants, particularly parties who may experience higher barriers to accessing justice." Perhaps these proposed court rules limiting parties' ability to represent their cases to the court in an accessible way would not be necessary if there were more procedural consistency in how these matters are addressed. There have been several observed instances of reissuance hearings taking considerably longer than full hearings. Based on these observances and the findings in RCW 7.105.900(5), it seems more appropriate to incorporate more structure in addressing these hearings in a consistent way rather which would minimize impacts to accessibility in navigating the court process for pro-se litigants.

- **Lastly, for LFLR 12 (i)**, the use of the term "Interpreted liberally" causes concern for how this accounts for procedural consistency regarding civil protection orders. One of the most significant impacts that has been witnessed is the liberal interpretation of these court rules resulting in very different experiences and outcomes for parties. Predominantly, commissioners are varying in their application of the 5-minute rule making it almost impossible for parties to prepare ahead of time as they do not know who they will be in front or what to expect. There have also been inconsistencies in application of the written submission limitations resulting again in wildly different experiences depending on the commissioner the parties are in front of. There does need to be a common standard in court processes to provide

consistency in experiences for the parties who are engaging in the civil protection order process, especially since many are navigating pro se with limited resources or support. And the common standards need to be mindful of any barriers or negative implications these can have on disenfranchised or marginalized communities.

Thank you in advance for your time in reviewing and considering this comment.

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