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To: LR Comments <lrcomments@kingcounty.gov>

Subject: COMMENTS FOR LCR 98.22

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This public comment raises concerns regarding the manner in which LCR 98.22 has been applied to consolidate multiple dependency and guardianship matters, including Cause Nos. 25-4-01090-0 KNT (Lead), 24-4-02980-7 KNT, 24-4-05368-6 KNT, 24-4-05651-1 KNT, 24-4-05750-9 KNT, and 25-4-05061-8 KNT.

While LCR 98.22 permits consolidation for purposes of judicial efficiency, its application in this instance appears to have extended beyond its intended scope by merging cases involving distinct factual allegations, parties, procedural histories, and governing legal standards. As a result, individualized consideration of each cause have been diluted, raising concerns regarding fair and separate adjudication of each matter on its own evidentiary record, as contemplated by due process principles under the Fourteenth Amendment and Article I, § 3 of the Washington Constitution.

As applied, the consolidation created substantial confusion regarding party rights, evidentiary boundaries, notice, and case-specific findings by combining separate proceedings into a single procedural framework. This structure reduces transparency in adjudication and may impair the ability of affected parties to meaningfully address allegations unique to each individual cause. It also centralizes decision-making before a single judicial officer in a manner that amplifies the impact of prior impressions formed during the procedural history. Concerns have been raised that certain aspects of that history were later alleged to involve misrepresentation, and that subsequent multi-day testimony was required to fully develop and clarify the evidentiary record.

This comment also notes concern that the consolidation process may have allowed participation by individuals without established familial or biological relationships to the children, where such involvement arose primarily through court-directed processes rather than preexisting legal or relational standing. This raises broader concerns about family association, notice, and the potential for reliance on contested allegations that may not always be supported by independently corroborated evidence.

Following evidentiary proceedings, including sworn testimony, concerns have been raised that some underlying allegations were not substantiated; however, a consolidated procedural structure may permit overlapping claims, parties, and narratives to influence multiple matters simultaneously, complicating fact-specific adjudication.

Accordingly, this comment respectfully encourages review of whether the application of LCR 98.22 in these circumstances remains consistent with its intended purpose and whether the resulting consolidation adequately protects fairness, due process, proper notice, and the integrity of judicial decision-making across all affected causes.

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I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear." –Rosa Parks