



*Justice... Professionalism... Service... Since 1886*

January 23, 2015

The Honorable Barbara Madsen, Chief Justice  
Washington State Supreme Court  
P.O. Box 40929  
Olympia, WA 98504-0929

Dear Chief Justice Madsen:

I am writing to express the King County Bar Association's significant concerns about the proposed amendments to JISCR 13 -- Electronic Court Record Systems, currently under consideration by the Court.

KCBA has long been interested in helping our local courts develop and manage information systems that are appropriate for the hundreds of thousands of cases filed in King County each year in the municipal, district, and superior courts. On behalf of the over 14,000 lawyers in King County, KCBA has worked closely with our local trial courts on these projects and we have a strong interest in providing feedback on behalf of our members on technology issues.

The current statewide court database system, SCOMIS, was cutting edge technology -- in 1970. Now over forty years old, stakeholders agree that this system must be replaced. However, for many reasons, some understandable others unclear, the Administrative Office of the Courts has not succeeded in creating a new statewide replacement. As a result, some courts (e.g., Pierce County and Seattle Municipal Court) have already created independent case management systems. King County has now opted to follow those courts, with the Metropolitan King County Council appropriating public funds last year for such a system that is expected to go online within 12-24 months.

KCBA fully endorses the decision to move forward with a King County solution that can be expeditiously implemented.

Unfortunately, we are concerned that the wording of the proposed rule might negatively impact King County's plans. The proposal would effectively restrict counties from proceeding with technology upgrades absent compliance with burdensome and ill-defined AOC approval procedures. In addition, the rule seems to require data entry into both the county's new system and the state's antiquated SCOMIS system.

An alternative solution may be available: KCBA has recently learned that discussions are ongoing with state legislators to secure special state funding for AOC to create a new "data hub" project that would allow local courts to share data with the current state database system or any

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future replacement. By using new funds dedicated for this purpose, AOC could continue developing a statewide database for those counties that choose to use it, while providing a data hub for all court systems to share information statewide.

We ask that the Court not adopt the proposed amendments to JISCR13 and instead direct AOC to work collaboratively with those local courts that desire to create their own case management systems. The development of a new data hub, with new dedicated funding provided by the state legislature, seems a much better alternative to adopting the proposed rule. KCBA stands ready to assist the Court with this effort.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven R. Rovig". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "R".

Steven R. Rovig  
President, King County Bar Association

cc: Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court