



July 24, 2026

Larry R. Rogers, Jr., Chair
Illinois Supreme Court Rules Committee
222 N. LaSalle Street, 13th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Chair Rogers,

The Crisis Center for South Suburbia is respectfully submitting comments in support of Proposal 25-09. The Crisis Center has served victims of domestic violence in the south suburbs of Chicago since 1979 and provides Court Advocacy in three courthouses: Bridgeview, Markham, and the 555 W. Harrison Domestic Violence Courthouse in Chicago. We support over 3,200 victims of domestic violence annually, through emergency shelter, transitional housing, court advocacy, victim outreach, and community counseling. The most critical moment for a victim of domestic violence is the moment they seek help. Court Advocates support victims through the process of filing an Order of Protection, understanding that a positive outcome for a victim in that moment could be the start of building a life free from abuse. Likewise, a negative outcome for a victim in our courthouses increases the likelihood that they will return to their abuser and be discouraged from reaching out for help again.

We recognize that no system is perfect, mistakes and errors will occur. For victims of domestic violence, an erroneously rejected emergency order of protection can have devastating and life threatening consequences. Without transcripts of any sort, victims of domestic violence who have an order of protection rejected lack a reliable record to request further review. This in turn gives appellate courts limited capabilities to review these cases. Transcripts also preserve the important details where individual recollection should not be the primary source: with conditions of the order, modifications, custody provisions, effectuation of service to a respondent who may be avoiding traditional avenues, and even firearm surrender requirements. A transcript is an important resource for victims of domestic violence in providing both clarity in the event of criminal prosecutions of violations and as evidence to support their right to appeal.

Victims of domestic violence seeking orders of protection are not the only individuals who will benefit from this change. This change would also support the integrity of the courtroom and the judicial system as a whole by providing an additional layer of transparency and accountability. The availability of recordings would increase institutional transparency while protecting victims of domestic violence (where Illinois law already restricts disclosure of certain domestic violence information) without making recordings broadly available to the public. Recordings protect everyone involved because they have a greater ability to disprove false accusations just as readily as they can substantiate legitimate ones. This month, the City of Chicago-Cook County Violence Against Women Task Force released its "Final Report and Recommendations to Build a Unified Court and Justice System." In the report, court recordings and transcripts are one of the clearest recommendations made (page 20). They also noted that the Judicial Inquiry Board receives hundreds of complaints each year that are dismissed before an investigation can even occur, and a lack of potential evidence or documentation is a routine issue (page 25).

The Illinois Supreme Court Rules Committee has the opportunity to act on a solution that has long been advocated for by domestic violence service providers, advocates, and survivors, among others. We strongly support this change and hope the Rules Committee will see the value this rule has the potential to make for victims of domestic violence and for the judicial system as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Pamela Kostecki
Executive Director

Crisis Center for South Suburbia | P.O. Box 39, Tinley Park, IL 60477 | Phone: 708-429-7255

www.crisisctr.org