

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2 COUNTY OF COOK) SS.
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5 SUPREME COURT RULES COMMITTEE
6 PUBLIC HEARING

7 ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT
8 BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE
9

10 Report of proceedings had at the public
11 hearing held at the Administrative Office of the
12 Illinois Courts, 222 North LaSalle Street, 13th Floor,
13 Chicago, Illinois 60601 in the above-entitled cause
14 before Larry R. Rogers, Committee Chairman, commencing
15 at 10:04 a.m. on the 3rd day of September, A.D., 2026.
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19
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21
22
23
24

I N D E X

SPEAKERS:	PAGE
Benna Crawford	2
Mike Starzec	15
Aimat Margalit	21
Mike Starzec	29
Honorable Jennifer Clifford	31
Alderwomen Monet Wilson	37
Aimee Lynn Albrecht	40
David Duyvejonck	44
Cassandra Taylor Bridges	49
Meghan Garnhart	51
Timothy Eaton	57
Sarah Brown	61
Elder Diane Brown	65
Retrinda Alley	70

1 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Let the record reflect that we do
2 have -- I do want to acknowledge the presence of
3 Illinois Supreme Court Justice O'Brien. Thank you for
4 attending.

5 With that, we'll start with the first item on
6 the agenda, which is regarding Proposal 25-09. We have
7 a witness here to speak.

8 We call Benna Crawford to the podium.

9 MS. CRAWFORD: Good morning. Thank you for the
10 opportunity to speak in support of Proposal 25-09, which
11 would amend Illinois Supreme Court Rule 46 to require
12 Courts to create and maintain a record of all protective
13 order proceedings either by stenographic means or by an
14 electronic recording system.

15 My name is Benna Crawford and I am a managing
16 director at Legal Aid Chicago, the largest provider of
17 civil legal services here in Cook County. We believe
18 Chicago for more than 50 years has represented survivors
19 of domestic violence. Since 2014 we have, also, managed
20 the Order of Protection Appeals Project in partnership
21 with Dentons. That project has produced significant
22 Appellate guidance -- significant Appellate decisions
23 that gave trial court judges critical guidance on the
24 Illinois Domestic Violence Act. But, as the number of

1 available court reporters has decreased in recent years,
2 so has the number of transcribed proceedings, and, with
3 it, our ability to evaluate potential appeals.

4 Amending Rule 46 is critical for three
5 reasons. It promotes transparency and meaningful
6 judicial review, it allows protective orders to be
7 enforced, and it ensures that a survivor's access to
8 justice does not depend on the County where the case is
9 heard or the survivor's ability to pay for a court
10 reporter.

11 The foundation for Proposal 25-09 already
12 exists here in Illinois. Approximately, 80 percent of
13 Illinois counties already routinely create a record of
14 protective order proceedings either through use of a
15 dedicated court reporter or an electronic reporting
16 system, yet, many litigants in protective order cases
17 still do not have access to a reliable record. Whether
18 a proceeding is recorded often depends on the County or
19 even the division within a County in which a case is
20 heard. The result is that many protective order
21 hearings remain unrecorded leaving survivors and
22 respondents in these cases without dependable,
23 reviewable record that fairness, accountability and due
24 process require.

1 One of the Court commitments of the Illinois
2 Supreme Court is access to justice. Meaningful review
3 is a basic component of access to justice and it exists
4 only when there is a reliable verbatim record of what
5 happened in the trial court. When no record is created,
6 poverty becomes a barrier to that access. Litigants
7 with resources often have lawyers who know how to
8 arrange for and can pay for a court reporter at every
9 hearing; however, time and again our OP Appeals Project
10 has reviewed cases involving unrepresented litigants
11 where the denial appeared deeply troubling, but, without
12 a transcript, we could not assess whether there was
13 grounds for appeal.

14 The result is a two-tiered system. Survivors
15 who can afford a court reporter can pursue an appeal
16 while survivors who cannot afford one are often denied
17 that opportunity. That is not equal access to justice.

18 As I mentioned earlier, a protective order is
19 a powerful legal tool because violating its terms is a
20 crime, but a violation can only be prosecuted if the
21 respondent has been personally served. And, the issue
22 with the lack of a record is, in these cases, is not
23 theoretical. Legal Aid Chicago has had clients face
24 this exact dilemma. One of our clients obtained an

1 order of protection against her husband after years of
2 escalating abuse. At a routine status, he was served in
3 open court with an extension of that order. There was
4 no court reporter available and no recording was made of
5 that proceeding. When he immediately violated the
6 order, the State filed criminal charges and took the
7 case to trial. Despite testimony about his actions, he
8 was found not guilty because, without a transcript or a
9 recording, the judge could not find beyond a reasonable
10 doubt that he had been served with the extension. The
11 order of protection that our client had fought for years
12 to obtain was essentially useless.

13 The written comments before this Committee
14 show broad support for this proposal. Of the 14 written
15 comments submitted on this proposed rule change, all
16 14 support its adoption. The question before this
17 Committee is not whether Illinois courts value access to
18 justice, it is whether the record in these high-stake
19 cases will be reliable enough to make that promise real.

20 We strongly urge this Committee to recommend
21 adoption of the proposed amendments to Rule 46,
22 requiring a record whether by stenographic means or by
23 electronic recording will make protective order
24 proceedings more transparent, more enforceable, and more

1 reviewable across Illinois. Most importantly, it will
2 ensure that access to justice in these high-stake cases
3 does not depend on geography or financial resources.

4 Thank you and I welcome any questions.

5 THE COURT: Thank you.

6 MS. PORTER: My question relates to the
7 stenographer versus the electronic recording.
8 Oftentimes, in court, people talk over each other and
9 it's hard when it's electronically recorded to decipher
10 who says what when, so do you have a preference over one
11 or the other, especially, given the important nature of
12 the cases under the statute you cite?

13 MS. CRAWFORD: I think that a certified live court
14 reporter is always going to be the gold standard for all
15 of the reasons that you just mentioned, and, I think, it
16 should always remain the gold standard. However, given
17 the reality of the availability of court reporters in
18 this state, in the instance where there is no court
19 reporter available to take it down, an electronic
20 recording system is a reasonable fall back.

21 Many of you may have seen there was a recent
22 decision last month from the California Supreme Court
23 Family Violence Appellate Project, and, in that
24 decision, the California Supreme Court asking that exact

1 question says that an electronic recording is better
2 than no recording at all.

3 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Any other questions?

4 MR. LARSEN: I would just ask: I agree with you.
5 I'm somebody who does a lot of appeals and I recognize
6 the importance of a record and appeals can be dismissed
7 based upon a lack of an adequate record. Do you know of
8 any study, information that has been obtained regarding
9 the cost associated with expanding electronic or
10 in-person court reporting access to the entire state,
11 especially, rural and remote areas?

12 MS. CRAWFORD: I do not know about a study that has
13 been commissioned. I do know that the Committee on --
14 the Domestic Violence Committee of the Supreme Court did
15 look into that question. I would say, however, though,
16 that given the investments in technology that have
17 already been made, as I mentioned, about 80 percent of
18 counties are already setup to do this, and, in many of
19 the courtrooms that are not setup to do this, like in
20 Cook County, there are computers, there are Zoom
21 capabilities already in place, and the Supreme Court has
22 already said that it is appropriate to use those
23 platforms like Zoom for an electronic recording pursuant
24 to Rule 46. So, I think, that this is much less about a

1 financial investment than it is about leveraging the
2 technology that already exists across the state, and,
3 perhaps, digging into policies and safeguards to make
4 sure that that technology is used consistently and
5 appropriately.

6 MR. NAVARRO: You mentioned Cook, so this amendment
7 changes proceedings of the Domestic Violence Act,
8 stalking, no contact, civil, no contract order. So, in
9 Cook, those proceedings -- I imagine you're talking
10 about the emergency petitions or which -- which of those
11 proceedings are not being recorded in Cook?

12 MS. CRAWFORD: It is less about which of the
13 proceedings; it is more about the location where the
14 case is being heard. So cases that are heard currently
15 in Cook County at the domestic violence courthouse at
16 555 West Harrison, when that building was built --
17 because it's a much newer building -- it was built with
18 electronic recording, infrastructure throughout the
19 building, so all of those proceedings are recorded.

20 Where this is an issue in Cook County
21 currently, is the domestic relation division over at the
22 Daley Center that does not -- that has computers and the
23 Zoom technology, but is not consistently recording
24 protective order proceedings as well as proceedings that

1 occur out in some of the suburban districts that may or
2 may not -- are not wired-up in the same way to
3 automatically be constantly recording and will need
4 policies and procedures to actually hit record during
5 these proceedings.

6 Does that answer your question?

7 MR. NAVARRO: I just saw in Cook, that because of
8 this lack of court reporters, that, I think, in the
9 misdemeanor branches they're implementing a Cook County
10 Rule to start electronic recording or Zoom recording of
11 some of the misdemeanor proceedings, and -- so I'm
12 wondering if -- I don't want to -- We don't want to make
13 a rule county by county. Is that your concern?

14 MS. CRAWFORD: That is my concern.

15 MR. NAVARRO: We want it across the state?

16 MS. CRAWFORD: Correct. Because it's already --
17 You know, we could, maybe, solve the problem here in
18 Cook with a series of local rules, but, then, in some
19 ways, that just exacerbates this problem where the
20 geography of where the survivor lives or where the
21 respondent in one of these cases lives determines the
22 level of access to justice, and that is what this rule
23 is intended to avoid.

24 MR. NAVARRO: Thanks.

1 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Thank you, Ms. Crawford.

2 Next we'll have Ms. Ainat Margalit and Mike
3 Starzec representing Supreme Court Commission on Access
4 to Justice.

5 MS. STARZEC: Good morning. My name is Michael
6 Starzec; I'm a partner at the law firm of Blitt and
7 Gaines, a firm that specializes in representing
8 creditors. I was honored to be asked to join the Access
9 to Justice Commission in its effort to modernize
10 Rules 277 and 286, as well as creating Rule 277, which
11 would help modernize and adjudicate the exemption
12 process.

13 Our Committee, with the unique collaboration
14 of the judiciary court clerks, consumer advocates,
15 attorneys to represent creditors, and attorneys who
16 represent consumers, we believe there are three rules,
17 Rule 277, which governs the rights of plaintiffs and
18 defendants in post judgement access to discovery assets
19 as well as 286, which governs the rights of parties in
20 small claims, once modernized, will both balance the
21 needs for the 21st Century and provide access to parties
22 would be subject to those proceedings.

23 As to Rule 277: The year was 1956, Elvis had
24 scored his first Number 1 hit with Heartbreak Hotel,

1 Charlton Heston was dominating the box office with the
2 Ten Commandments, and the Illinois Supreme Court
3 promulgated Rule 24, supplementary proceedings, to deal
4 with what we call today citations to discovery assets.

5 In 1967 Rule 24 became Rule 277, quote,
6 without change in substance, and, in fact, here on its
7 70th birthday, Rule 277 is remained remarkably unchanged
8 while its legislative (inaudible) Section 21402 of the
9 code, citations to discovery assets, has undergone
10 substantial amendment in that same time frame.

11 This is the reason why the Access to Justice
12 Commission believes that the citation to discovery
13 assets process should be modernized in the following
14 ways: Number 1, defining citations to discovery asset
15 to match its counterpart within the Code providing for
16 the sale of real and personal property under the
17 supervision of a judge, which aligns its practice in
18 bankruptcy court, clarifying the Court's rule, to
19 supervise enforcement to balance the rights of the
20 parties, confirming the timing of when a citation to
21 discovery assets can issue, when it may reissue, the
22 appropriate venue, and when a citation can be
23 transferred. It clarifies that a citation can be issued
24 against a third party who may hold assets as well as the

1 judgment debtor. It, also, comports the rule with
2 existing statutory efforts under the Wage Deduction Act
3 and Non-wage Deduction Act, which allows for service of
4 those actions against parties outside the county where
5 the judgment was entered. It allows for a written
6 answer to the citation to substitute for a personal
7 appearance in court, it clarifies the nature and
8 duration of a citation lien, it clarifies, as well, when
9 attorneys' fees can be levied for failure to comply with
10 Court orders or citations, it encourages remote
11 proceedings and compliments the 2025 amendment to the
12 Exemption Act, which increased many of the exemptions
13 which unrepresented parties would be allowed to present
14 in court when served with a citation to discovery
15 assets.

16 The Commission believes that this
17 modernization of the rule will balance both the rights
18 of judgement creditors to seek access, but, also, allow
19 greater access to unrepresented individuals to assert
20 their rights to exemption in court.

21 I stand ready to answer any questions.

22 MR. LARSEN: I have several questions on this
23 because this is concerning to me for a number of
24 reasons.

1 You mentioned that you have spoken with
2 creditors, with consumers. Have you spoken with the
3 business community or with potential defendants in
4 litigation because here's what I've seen in the last few
5 years: I've seen plaintiff's attorneys get judgments
6 against defendants and the Illinois Code of Civil
7 Procedure -- for anyone who doesn't know -- provides
8 that if a posttrial motion is timely filed within
9 30 days of a judgment, it stays enforcement of those
10 proceedings, and, yet, at least, in Cook County, it has
11 been interpreted that if a judgment creditor runs into
12 court immediately, they can start serving citations to
13 discovery assets within that 30 day timeframe, thereby,
14 effectively eliminating the right of a defendant to
15 pursue posttrial relief with the effect that their
16 assets are frozen, a doctrine in one case I'm aware of
17 could not transfer money from her bank account to her
18 son, a corporation was threatened with bankruptcy that
19 their -- their activities were frozen subject to control
20 by the Court. So there are very real world consequences
21 that raise to the courthouse that's existing here in a
22 circumstance where defendants are supposed to be
23 entitled to be able to seek posttrial relief if they
24 timely file within 30 days of a judgement, and, yet,

1 your proposal would say, first of all, they can do it
2 immediately, secondly, they can do it in any court
3 anywhere at any time, third, they can send it to third
4 parties with or without notice to the actual defendant
5 in those circumstances such that citations are being
6 issued, assets are being frozen for judgement defendant
7 who may have a very real and very legitimate basis to
8 pursue posttrial relief.

9 So what efforts has your organization
10 undertaken to identify those concerns and discuss with
11 potential judgment debtors who have posttrial relief
12 rights a way to protect those rights, as well?

13 MR. STARZEC: Well, one of the ways we're
14 protecting the rights of individuals is the new Supreme
15 Court Rule 278, which is going to be standardizing in
16 the exemption process. Within the rule itself, yes, the
17 rule does indicate that a citation can issue upon entry
18 of a judgment, but I'm not sure if that's necessarily a
19 change from the law. However, within the -- within our
20 proposal, while the lien will remain active, the Court
21 can take any action whatsoever it needs to stay the
22 proceedings, including, emergency proceedings. So, in
23 those particular instances, that's a protection.

24 Additionally, regarding the freezing of funds,

1 as you may be aware under the 2025 Postjudgment
2 Modernization Act, the Personal Property Exemption Act
3 automatically allows a \$1,000 exemption of funds that
4 cannot be frozen at any time until the Court enters an
5 order. So, during that time frame, if a consumer or
6 individual whose bank account is frozen needs to use
7 that money, it is free to be used up until the point the
8 judge enters an order. So there is already existing in
9 the law a way to ensure that if funds are necessary for
10 medical needs, for rent, for mortgage, for groceries,
11 those funds have already been freed, which is why I say
12 why this rule compliments that change because now we've
13 given people an ability to avoid a lien which will
14 impact their lives, but, at the same time, we're
15 modernizing the rule in light of that change.

16 MR. LARSEN: Well, \$1,000 doesn't cover most
17 peoples' mortgages, it doesn't allow a parent to pay
18 tuition for a child to go to college, it may not allow
19 them to pay for a car repair or a home repair in a
20 circumstance where they may have every right to pursue
21 posttrial relief. I had a case where, candidly -- and I
22 won't discuss who the judge was in the circumstances --
23 but the Court made a very poor ruling that led to a
24 judgment against a client of mine, and, yet, the

1 plaintiff could run into court, immediately freeze my
2 client's assets even though everybody in that courtroom
3 knew that we were pursuing posttrial relief that had a
4 very valid basis. So you are sort of doubling-down on
5 the notion that this can be initiating immediately. I
6 think the opposite should take place, that no
7 enforcement should be permitted within that 30-day
8 window if a defendant is going to be pursuing posttrial
9 relief because otherwise the Illinois Code of Civil
10 Procedure that provides for staying those proceedings
11 pending the resolution of a posttrial motion becomes all
12 but meaningless. You're scrambling, you know, for a
13 \$1,000 when somebody has expenses greatly in excess of
14 that and their assets are the ones frozen. That's the
15 concern that I have.

16 MR. STARZEC: I know for a fact since I'm in court
17 on these matters at any given time on a regular basis
18 the judges who handles trials or these matters will stay
19 execution of postjudgment execution within the judgment
20 order itself if a party announces I may intend to appeal
21 this. So there is already a remedy in court for a party
22 who happens to be in court. It seems to be -- I'm not
23 coming at you -- but it seems like you're actually
24 saying that this rule is a change from the previous

1 procedure. I can always file a wage deduction or a
2 non-wage deduction or a citation to discovery assets or
3 a citation to a third party immediately upon entering
4 the judgment, but I also knew that if an appeal is filed
5 and they do the Appellate bond, if they appeared in
6 court and asked for a stay, then, my client would not be
7 allowed to execute. And, to the extent the Court made a
8 decision I'm going to release all the funds until this
9 appeal has been resolved, that's a danger that my client
10 will have to deal with after having expended the cost
11 and my time.

12 MR. LARSEN: And I can tell you my experience has
13 been very different in terms of the Court's willingness
14 to stay enforcement proceedings following a judgment
15 because I handle appeals for my firm and I -- and we've
16 dealt with a very different circumstances with firms
17 that very aggressively pursue that and use it candidly
18 in the negotiation process to say, if we get a judgment,
19 the day we get that judgment we're running in and
20 freezing everything for your client, so you better deal
21 with that, which I don't consider to be justice for the
22 defendant.

23 Now, the rule does provide some changes
24 because it allows easier ability to file these. That's

1 the -- If the intent of your changes is to be able to
2 file it in any county, one of the proposed changes, and
3 to file it against third-party defendants without naming
4 the defendant, which creates issues of notice to a
5 party, and, if you go to enforce a Cook County judgment
6 in McLean County, how is a defendant supposed to be able
7 to run out to McLean County and address that while
8 they're pursuing a posttrial motion in Cook County?
9 That creates a problem with their ability to have their
10 assets frozen.

11 MR. STARZEC: Nowhere in the rule -- and remember
12 the rule is a compliment to Section 21402 of the
13 Code -- if you read 21402 of the Code, there's numerous
14 notice requirements to parties who are subject to a
15 citation. A third-party citation is treated the same as
16 a non-wage garnishment. Under the Non-wage Garnishment
17 Act, I have to give notice to the individual by mail, I
18 have to give notice of the citation either by serving it
19 or if it's a third-party citation, then, to say am I
20 giving them notice. So none of these are happening by
21 surprise.

22 I think you're mistaking the fact that we want
23 to be able to have parties issue citations to third
24 parties that will adversely impact the consumer. I can

1 tell you when I started practicing law, all the banks
2 were down on LaSalle Street. Now, you may have a Chase
3 branch one block from your house, but, in order for a
4 creditor to issue a bank citation, their bank levy
5 department is located in Louisiana. I can't serve their
6 registered agent, I have to serve them in Louisiana. So
7 all this rule recognizes is that in order for me to get
8 a certified citation recognized by JP Morgan Chase Bank,
9 I have to serve them out of state, and it would
10 certainly impact the consumer if I have to domesticate a
11 judgment in Louisiana in order for me to get \$4,000 from
12 the account, and, then, have them be allowed to use
13 their exemption against that.

14 And, in practice, as well, a third-party
15 citation, if someone -- I'm sorry -- on a regular
16 citation if someone fails to appear in court, you have
17 to do a rule to show cause to get contempt against them.
18 That has to be personally served and an attachment only
19 enters after that has taken place and no shares can
20 execute it if the person doesn't reside in the County,
21 so you're never doing a citation to discover assets
22 against a party outside the County where they live.
23 And, in 2012, in collaboration with Attorney General
24 Lisa Madigan, there was a Debtors Reform Act, which bans

1 the use of arrest for debt matters except in the case
2 where a Court has found contempt by the individual.

3 So, I think, a lot of your concerns which --
4 on its face, I understand it looks like -- but if you
5 look at the greater context of the existing legislation
6 and legislation that has passed in the past, these are
7 actually protections. And, keep in mind, we've had
8 consumer advocates, we've had Chicago Legal Aid, we've
9 had consumer attorneys who love to sue my clients over
10 violations of the law, and all of us came together and
11 collaborated and believed that this was an accurate
12 balancing of both the rights of creditors and the rights
13 of unrepresented individuals.

14 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: I want to be respectful of our
15 other speakers and time here, so I want to thank you,
16 Mr. Starzec. I don't want to be rude if there's some
17 other questions, but we do have to respectful of our
18 other speakers, as well.

19 MR. STARZEC: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Ms. Margalit.

21 MS. MARGALIT: Good morning. My name is Ainat
22 Margalit; I'm the director of the Consumer Process Group
23 at Legal Aid Chicago providing free civil legal services
24 to low-income debtors across Cook County.

1 I would, also, like to address the special
2 nature on the Commission on Access to Justice Consumer
3 Debt Committee. We came together with lofty goal of
4 making debt collections in courtrooms and processes
5 better for everyone involved. Although, Committee
6 members often appear on opposite sides of the bench or
7 the aisle, we all agreed on those proposed rules.

8 I will turn to Rule 278. To date, there has
9 not been a Supreme Court Rule that determined how and
10 when a debtor may assert exemptions to postjudgment
11 enforcement. This rule is proposed to provide clarity,
12 uniformity, expediency and efficiency. Personal
13 property exemptions are intended to protect the judgment
14 debtor and his family by securing the necessary shelter
15 and personal property required for their welfare and
16 times of difficult economic circumstances. At top of
17 mind, the Committee had a low-income judgment debtor and
18 access to justice. A frequent scenario is a citation to
19 discovery assets issued against the debtor's bank
20 account and the debtor's ability to assert the personal
21 property exemption of \$4,000. Upon issuance of the
22 citation that was discussed before, funds in the
23 debtor's bank account over \$1,000 are frozen and he
24 cannot access them until a Court rules on his exemption.

1 Delays in a ruling on exemption can lead to a snowball
2 of dire consequences because today \$1,000 is not enough
3 typically for the debtor to pay for rent and groceries
4 and utilities and a car payment.

5 Illinois do not want to leave debtors
6 destitute in the face of debt collection; therefore,
7 proposed Rule 278 suggests an expedited process with
8 explicit negative notice, time frames for objecting and
9 ruling on the exemption, no requirement of a written
10 motion or a wait -- or to wait for the bank to file
11 their answer, which the answers are frequently
12 significantly delayed. This rule recognizes, also, that
13 a creditor's objection to this type of exemption is
14 rare.

15 Additionally, Rule 278 emphasizes that the
16 purpose of exemptions is to allow the debtor to meet his
17 basic needs at any given time, not just once during the
18 life of the judgment as some Illinois court rooms have
19 held. At the same time, exemptions can only be used
20 once at that specific point in time and not excessively
21 or cumulatively over different accounts and proceedings.

22 Are there any questions about Rule 278 before
23 I see the floor back to Mr. Starzec?

24 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: This -- If I may for context --

1 First of all, thank you. As I understand it, this is
2 after a judgment has been entered, correct?

3 MS. MARGALIT: Yes.

4 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: And the claimant has been
5 waiting, potentially, years for a judgment on their
6 claim, correct?

7 MS. MARGALIT: (Nodding.)

8 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: And, once they receive a
9 judgment, if they can't enforce that timely against
10 income, the income can be depleted, the assets depleted
11 since the judgment was never collected, correct?

12 MS. MARGALIT: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: So, the claimant, who has
14 successfully litigated for years, obtains a judgment,
15 had the judgment entered may never be able to collect on
16 the judgment if assets can be depleted by way of
17 exemption of this type, correct?

18 MS. MARGALIT: Well, I wouldn't use the term
19 "depleted" when we're talking about exemptions. The
20 Illinois exemption regime is pretty sparse, I would say.
21 It was recently beefed-up. The \$15,000 notice that
22 exemption was increased to \$50,000, the wild card
23 exemption of \$4,000 for personal property wasn't
24 changed, the exemption for personal injury proceeds,

1 which was \$15,000 is now \$22,000. I would say those are
2 pretty sparse and Spartan. If you're only allowed to
3 protect -- If you have a judgment against you for
4 \$18,000, you're only allowed to protect 4,000 of your --
5 the other exemptions are if your income is Social
6 Security benefits or -- which, I think, we can all agree
7 should be protected, so it's a pretty small amount that
8 a judgement debtor --

9 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: I guess, my point is only there's
10 a balance that I respect and understand with
11 enforcement, but you're also talking about a party
12 that's been agreed, potentially, years while those
13 assets have been available to the ultimate person who
14 was --

15 MS. MARGALIT: Well -- Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Do you see what I'm saying? It
17 could be depleted, it had access while this claimant may
18 have had no income, may have had -- been unable to
19 work --

20 MS. MARGALIT: Well, that has been --

21 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Judgement seems to be a final
22 point where a decision has been made and the agreed
23 party should be able to enforce that until some relief
24 of some type is granted --

1 MS. MARGALIT: And this doesn't change that. This
2 doesn't change the Illinois statute. Also, it doesn't
3 change the Illinois statute that you can pursue a
4 citation to discovery assets immediately. I think your
5 beef is more with the legislature. It doesn't change
6 any of that. There is -- There is an exemption regime
7 in Illinois and this just provides a vehicle for -- in
8 order to assert exemptions currently in Cook County.
9 Exemptions are being asserted by e-mail -- a gmail
10 address, I should say. So having something that is more
11 of a process will benefit everyone.

12 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Okay. Thank you.

13 Any other questions?

14 MS. PORTER: I have a question.

15 Two things: I know the Supreme Court
16 Commission on Access to Justice is very good about
17 taking into account self-represented litigants. Under
18 your Rule 78, Section B-2, Subsection 4, it includes all
19 the standardized motion forms and notice forms, but
20 cross-referencing it to 26-06, you're providing --
21 you're now requiring a written answer in lieu of
22 appearance.

23 Again, a lot of self-represented litigants are
24 not going to know what a written answer is, so can we

1 add the written answers to the standardized form so that
2 Access to Justice will be fair to the self-represented
3 litigants?

4 MS. MARGALIT: We can address that comment.

5 MS. PORTER: And the second one -- and anyone else
6 speaking on this rule can also address this -- under
7 your sanctions section under Subsection M of 26-06,
8 Number 3, there's an inclusion for attorneys' fees. Is
9 that statutory because that's a brand new addition and
10 I'm not sure -- you know, honestly, don't know if we can
11 allow for attorneys' fees where the state's legislature
12 did not include it. They include costs, that makes
13 sense, but you're asking a Supreme Court Rule to give
14 you -- whoever the "you" is -- the right to attorneys'
15 fees and is it reciprocal? That's my question. Of
16 course, if the creditor wins, they want attorneys' fees,
17 but what if the debtor wins?

18 MS. MARGALIT: We will address those comments.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. LARSEN: If I may, Mr. Chairman?

21 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Yes.

22 MR. LARSEN: Just real briefly to answer your
23 question, and, I think, Justice Porter raised some great
24 points.

1 There are two sides to these transactions and
2 I respectfully disagree with the Chairman that judgement
3 is the end of the game because we have a system that
4 exists for posttrial motions and posttrial relief in
5 circumstances where a Court enters a judgment in error,
6 and what I would like to see in an amendment to these
7 rules is something that recognizes that balance and
8 acknowledges that there's a statutory gap. There is a
9 statute -- The statute doesn't clearly say when the
10 citation can be initiated. Now it's more clearly
11 saying, at any time, immediately upon judgment, and that
12 creates a gap between the time frame that's allowed for
13 the filing of a posttrial motion and the enforcement of
14 a judgment, and there are very real consequences, and
15 not just in smaller cases where it's a few thousand
16 dollars or an exemption, but for medical practice that
17 can have its practice literally shutdown, it's inability
18 to pay its own employees, its inability to collect funds
19 from the insurance companies that pay for medical
20 treatment because we've seen that happen. They can be
21 frozen while still within the 30-day window to file a
22 posttrial motion, and, I think, that's troubling and
23 that's something that should be addressed in any
24 amendments to these rules.

1 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Thank you.

2 MR. STARZEC: Unfortunately, I'm back.

3 My name is Michael Starzec; I'm here to speak
4 on behalf of Supreme Court Rule 286. When Supreme Court
5 Rule 286 was promulgated, the small claims limit was a
6 \$1,000, and it appears that the intent of the rule was
7 to help a local businessman who may be pursuing a small
8 invoicing as a local patron or a neighbor squalling over
9 how much damage was done by a misbehaving dog. But,
10 when the Supreme Court increased the small claims limit
11 to \$10,000, it coincided with the time the use of credit
12 cards and application for credit cards exploded with the
13 Internet revolution.

14 According to the Consumer Finance Protection
15 Bureau, there are almost 800 million credit cards in
16 active circulation as of today, and the average balance
17 on those credit cards is \$6,000, hence, the \$10,000
18 limit means that almost the vast majority of credit card
19 litigation, consumer debt is litigated by small claims
20 courts in Illinois, which happen to be the sorts of
21 cases where it was most likely a party will be
22 self-represented.

23 In light of those circumstances, we believe
24 our clarifications for Rule 286 will be helpful because,

1 first, we clarified the defendant does not need to file
2 an appearance before the return date, which will help
3 avoid immediate default judgements and clarify so the
4 Court can order an immediate appearance or allow it on a
5 date certain at a later time. It eliminates the concept
6 that the return date on a summons is an immediate trial
7 date. Not only does that reflect modern practice, but
8 we believe unrepresented individuals might have been
9 afraid to show up in court knowing that the minute that
10 they show up in the courtroom they're going to have to
11 defend themselves in a trial.

12 We, also, believe it provides guidance for the
13 informal hearing requirements so that Courts know that
14 while they can relax the rules, you cannot ignore
15 hearsay or privilege exceptions. Additionally, we
16 believe it compliments the statutory amendment that
17 passed in 2025, which waived appearance fees in small
18 claims cases to encourage participation. With that
19 backdrop, the Access to Justice Commission believes that
20 our clarifying amendment would help create a
21 standardized process throughout the state and how to
22 address small claims matters, it will increase
23 self-represented individuals participation in these
24 matters, and while maintaining the informality of it,

1 that informality cannot be asserted against
2 unrepresented persons while still allowing judgement
3 creditors the rights to pursue their action in court.

4 And I stand ready for any questions.

5 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Thank you. Any questions?

6 Next we will call the Honorable Jennifer
7 Clifford to speak on Supreme Court Committee on Domestic
8 Violence, Proposal 26-07.

9 MS. CLIFFORD: Good morning. I'm coming here to
10 you today as the chair of the Illinois Supreme Court
11 Committee on domestic violence and human trafficking and
12 I'm also an Associate Judge in the 17th Judicial
13 Circuit, which is Winnebago County, and I'm located in
14 Rockford

15 I'm here today to represent the Committee
16 regarding Proposal 26-07, amendments to Supreme Court
17 Rule 906. During my tenure as the chair of the Illinois
18 Supreme Court Committee, we have worked to address a
19 number of issues relating to domestic violence and the
20 Courts. One recurring issue that we've heard listening
21 to sessions around the state and during trainings we
22 have conducted and speaking with attorneys and judges
23 and advocates and legal aid groups is the fact that
24 guardians ad litem are being called upon to make

1 extremely important recommendations that they're giving
2 to Court judges, who are making extremely important
3 decisions impacting families, and we need to make sure
4 these guardians ad litem are able to give judges the
5 best information possible and assist them in making
6 their decisions. To that end, the Supreme Court
7 Committee created a guardian ad litem work group. We
8 pulled people from around the state, attorneys that are
9 working as guardians ad litem appointed in domestic
10 relations in family cases, judges and advocates.

11 We all know guardians ad litem have a very
12 difficult role and must balance emotionally charged
13 litigants, factually complex cases and families
14 experiencing trauma while making life-altering
15 recommendations for children and families. GALs must
16 have the tools and training to represent and advocate
17 for the best interest of the child. Feedback from
18 domestic violence survivors, legal assistance programs,
19 and other key Court stakeholders indicate a lack of
20 knowledge by some guardians ad litem on the dynamics of
21 domestic violence, orders of protection, and,
22 importantly, the impact of domestic violence on
23 children. Without specialized training, these guardians
24 ad litem may misrepresent victim behavior -- may

1 misinterpret -- I'm sorry -- victim behavior, minimize
2 the risk and make recommendations that inadvertently
3 endanger families. Domestic violence is not simply high
4 conflict between parents. It involves patterns of
5 coercive control, intimidation of both the survivor and
6 minor children, isolation, financial abuse, manipulation
7 and threats.

8 Looking at a very relatively small sample of
9 cases in Winnebago County, we screen all of our domestic
10 relations or divorce in family cases for domestic
11 violence. In the past 5 years there have been 390
12 divorce cases with children that have been identified in
13 our circuit as having current or past involvement with
14 domestic violence, whether it be orders of protection or
15 a criminal case involving domestic violence in the last
16 5 years. That's, approximately, 20 percent of divorce
17 cases in Winnebago County that are identified as having
18 children and having domestic violence, and that's just a
19 small sample of those cases that have previous
20 identification of domestic violence that have been
21 brought to the Court system.

22 To address this, our worker recommended and
23 our full Committee approved a proposal to strength
24 training requirements on domestic violence related

1 issues for GALs appointed in domestic relations and
2 child custody cases. The proposed amendments to
3 Rule 906(c) enhances the current training requirements
4 by requiring attorneys to have 4 hours and 2 years prior
5 to the date the attorney qualifies for appointment and
6 approved continuing legal education courses on intimate
7 partner domestic violence. Rule 906, attorney
8 qualifications and education and child custody
9 allocation of parental responsibilities, visitation and
10 parenting time matters was promulgated to ensure that
11 counsel, who are appointed by the Court to participate
12 in child custody, allocation of parental
13 responsibilities, visitation, and parenting time matters
14 as delineated and at Rule 900(b)(2) possess the ability,
15 knowledge and experience to do so in a competent and
16 professional manner. Specialized training will help
17 ensure that guardians ad litem possess the skills and
18 understanding necessary to identify domestic violence,
19 assess risks, and make informed recommendations to the
20 judiciary where domestic violence is alleged.

21 As we know, judges rely heavily on guardian ad
22 litem recommendations, therefore, training on domestic
23 violence is critical for GALs as they make these
24 recommendations that directly and indirectly affect

1 child safety, parenting time, custody arrangements and
2 family stability. Judges around our state are already
3 being trained now on domestic violence. We've increased
4 the number of courses being taught at EDCON, we have
5 gone into the new judge orientation and new training
6 judges, but judges can't rely on their own training,
7 they have to rely on information that is provided to
8 them to make a decision and to make a record on the
9 case. That's why it's key that the guardians ad litem
10 are also receiving this training.

11 And, understand, we are well aware of the
12 legal dessert and landscape of our state and adding
13 requirements to attorneys might in some way impact the
14 amount of guardians ad litem available. To offset that
15 concern, we developed a nine-part series, it's a 10-hour
16 course on domestic violence, specifically, designed for
17 guardians ad litem, also, judges would be invited to
18 attend far exceeding the requirement of this proposed
19 rule amendment. The courses are now in the approval
20 process by the Illinois Supreme Court Judicial College
21 Guardian Ad Litem Education Committee, the Committee on
22 Judicial Education, and the Board of Trustees. These
23 courses will be made available through the path LMS
24 System, meaning, that the courses will be offered live

1 but also recorded for future use and include
2 corresponding continuing legal education credits.
3 Currently, that contains several domestic violence
4 related courses in both the Supreme Court Committee and
5 Guardian Ad Litem Committee are committed to providing
6 continuing legal education on this topic. The Committee
7 also believes and knows that this is an extremely
8 difficult role for guardians ad litem in navigating
9 these domestic violence cases and we're hopeful that
10 increasing their comfort with this topic and aiding them
11 in understanding the dynamics will also aid in
12 preventing burnout and turnover from guardians ad litem.

13 I do thank you for your consideration of this
14 important rule change, and I'm happy to answer any
15 questions that you might have.

16 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Thank you, Judge Clifford.

17 MR. NAVARRO: Just to be clear, it's 10 hours right
18 now that the guardians ad litem are required. This
19 would be an additional 4 hours or is it 4 hours of those
20 10?

21 MS. CLIFFORD: 4 hours of those 10.

22 MR. NAVARRO: Okay. Thank you.

23 MS. PORTER: I know there is Office of the Public
24 Guardian, we use them more up here in Cook County than

1 probably the rest of the state, would you want them to
2 have this training, as well, because I'm not sure what
3 kind of training that they have to take part of, but
4 they serve as the attorneys and GALs especially in the
5 child protection cases and some of the juvenile cases?

6 MS. CLIFFORD: I think this would be training that
7 would be welcome and available to them if they want to
8 participate in it. Right now we're talking about,
9 specifically, in the family court with divorce and
10 domestic violence orders of protection or family cases.

11 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Thank you.

12 Next we have Alderwoman Monet Wilson of the
13 2nd Ward of Calumet City speaking on behalf of Proposal
14 26-07.

15 MS. WILSON: Hello. Good morning, Chairman Rogers,
16 members of the Rules Committee. So I am so excited that
17 the Honorable Jennifer Clifford spoke, so I don't have
18 to go over all of that legal lingo, but I am going to
19 present more of -- on behalf of the children that I
20 represent in Calumet City throughout Illinois and with
21 the (inaudible) Foundation.

22 So, again, I am Alderwoman Monet Wilson. I
23 chair Calumet City Health, Education and Welfare
24 Committee. I've, also, established the Domestic

1 Violence Task Force in Calumet City, and, like I just
2 said, I represent the Tamara (phonetic) Foundation. And
3 I work with children for -- and their families for
4 nearly 20 years.

5 I am here today in support of Proposal 2607.
6 We just went over what that was, so I won't go back into
7 that, but I want to make sure that everybody understands
8 domestic violence is not just physical, it's not a
9 bruise, it's not a police report, it is something much
10 more than that that lives with you for the rest of your
11 life.

12 I am 50 years old, and, as I was writing this
13 the other night, I had flashes of when I was 6 when my
14 father slammed my mother into a wall. I'm 50 and I
15 still feel that. So, when children are involved, that
16 harm often follows the family directly into custody and
17 parenting time proceedings. Through my work with
18 children, I have learned that children do not always
19 have the words to explain what is happening to them.
20 Their pain may appear as anger, it may appear as silence
21 for attention, anxiety, depression, fear or difficulty
22 concentrating. A child may suddenly change a story,
23 protect the abuser, and protect those causing harm.
24 They may repeat language that sounds like it came from

1 an adult or believe it is their responsibility to keep
2 the peace in the family. Terms such as grooming, trauma
3 bonding, even recanting of stories often is
4 misunderstood adolescent behavior and it's overlooked
5 abuse and the effects of that abuse. A child who is
6 always watching the room, sometimes they're considered
7 to be disrespectful and they're simply afraid. A child
8 who withdraws a statement may not have been dishonest,
9 they may feel the fear of what will happen behind their
10 truth. A child who appears visually mature, may have
11 been forced to carry responsibilities and emotional
12 burdens that no child should have to carry. Children
13 who witness domestic violence are also victims of that
14 violence. When we ask guardians ad litem to participate
15 in 4 hours of domestic violence training or education,
16 that is not an extensive ask, it was a reasonable
17 minimum. They are responsible for the child's future,
18 the safety of the child, and everything must be done.

19 Coming here today, I had to go meet a child,
20 13 years old, who the guardian ad litem approved --
21 fought to approve parenting time for the father. The
22 father was abusing him -- is abusing him just like he
23 did his mother. We have to understand that parental
24 conflict is one thing and parental abuse is another, and

1 if we do not acknowledge that and we don't have the
2 knowledge to know how to decipher the difference, it is
3 a dangerous atmosphere we place our kids in.

4 So, again, I ask that you consider and
5 strong -- and I strongly support 2607 and the rule
6 change from 906. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Thank you.

8 Next we have Ms. Aimee Lynn Albrecht speaking
9 on Proposals 25-09 and 26-07.

10 MS. ALBRECHT: Good morning, Chairman Rogers and
11 members of the Committee. I'm here to support Proposal
12 2905 and Proposal 27- -- 2607, and I address them
13 together because my protective order case was
14 consolidated with a disabled adult guardianship case.

15 One preserves what happened, the other turns
16 to professional investigating; both require facts. In
17 my consolidated proceedings, the Court imposed a
18 definite 13-week jail sentence, although, execution was
19 stayed. Once incarceration is imposed, the record
20 should show why. What evidence -- What findings, what
21 triggers imprisonment, and, if the contempt is civil,
22 what act allow the person to purge. If the government
23 can take away a person's liberty, it should be able to
24 show exactly why. I identified material courtroom

1 content -- conduct I believe was missing from a
2 transcript, whether it favored me and it was for review.
3 First, it had to be preserved. A transcript represents
4 the proceeding. When a proceeding exists, it is the
5 source. If transcript accuracy is challenged,
6 comparison to that source should be simple, not another
7 legal battle. Let us listen to the record. A
8 protective order is an essential safety tool, but it can
9 also be misused.

10 The protective order in my case was extended
11 through December 31st, 2009. Illinois law requires
12 findings and an official record and writing -- and I
13 have those statutes -- and I ask were those findings on
14 the record that effectively put an order against me
15 affecting the rest of my life? I am not asking you to
16 decide that question, only that the record exists so a
17 reviewing Court can. I am not -- Preserve the record,
18 let the record answer.

19 That brings me to Proposal 26-07. I support
20 GAL, guardian ad litem, training on abuse; coercive
21 control, post-separation abuse, trauma and isolation.
22 Training cannot become another box checked. It must
23 change the investigation. I have heard, I do not
24 represent you, true, but not representing a party does

1 not mean failing to investigate that person, the
2 information they provide or the evidence that they
3 identify. A trained guardian ad litem must
4 distinguish -- be able to distinguish adult conflict
5 from unsafe parenting. No fit parent should ever be a
6 race because another person is more likeable, more
7 persuasive or more powerful. A guardian ad litem cannot
8 be the Court's eyes and ears without investigative work,
9 without being trained on what to investigate and how to
10 investigate that, especially, coercive control, which is
11 definitely a form of abuse, it's not always physical
12 abuse. Oftentimes, we overlook the things that we can't
13 see on the surface and have to dig deeper.

14 A trained guardian ad litem must know the law,
15 notice, the right to be heard, access to records and
16 duties owed to the person they protect. One parent
17 should not erase the other by allegation, personality or
18 persistence. Questions need to be asked who's seeking
19 the restrictions. What evidence supports it? Has it
20 been reassessed? Has it been in time? Has it -- Take
21 the time to reassess because situations do change. What
22 does the child or protective person actually want?
23 Privately, free from fear, pressure or coercion. Is
24 there a documented safety reason for preventing

1 communication? A guardian ad litem I really believe
2 needs to be trained on how to recognize trauma responses
3 and not be mistaken for dishonesty, instability or
4 incapacity. Silence is not consent and a diagnosis does
5 not erase credibility. An agency conclusion should not
6 substitute for independent investigation. I know the
7 value of a good guardian ad litem. As a minor, I was a
8 ward of this State, and that guardian ad litem heard my
9 wishes when my unsafe mother sought to regain custody of
10 me and helped me obtain emancipation. I had to be
11 successful to get that emancipation. The guardian ad
12 litem heard me and observed me. Being heard made a
13 lasting difference in my life.

14 I have two other family situations where a
15 child was involved and the guardianship was involved and
16 the proceedings started without even noticing the
17 required parties for notice. We can do better. Lost
18 years cannot be restored. A guardian ad litem can cross
19 every battle line and interrupt the cycle with facts,
20 not simply echo inside or become another name on a
21 docket.

22 I ask that training extend guardian ad litem
23 serving children, disabled adults and elderly, and one
24 further step: When a guardian ad litem fails those

1 duties, families should have a clear, independent place
2 to report it for meaningful review. When liberty,
3 family relationships and vulnerable people are at stake,
4 the system should show what happened, who investigated
5 and why.

6 Proposal 25-09 preserves the record. Proposal
7 26-07 strengthens the investigation. Do not assume,
8 investigate. Do not guess what happened, preserve it.

9 Thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions.

10 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Thank you.

11 Next we have David Duyvejonck. I apologize if
12 I mispronounced your name. We have a long addenda and
13 this is a very sensitive topic, as are many, but we are
14 trying to limit speakers to 5 minutes out of respect to
15 other speakers.

16 MR. DUYVEJONCK: Good morning. My name is David
17 Duyvejonck. I respectfully encourage the Committee to
18 adopt Proposal 25-09 and 26-07.

19 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Sir, can you please speak up?

20 MR. DUYVEJONCK: Sorry.

21 I encourage Proposals 25-09 and 26-07 because
22 they would make protective order proceedings more
23 reliable, reviewable and fair, particularly, when
24 children with disabilities, domestic abuse allegations

1 and family law proceedings overlap.

2 In August 2024, I did what any protective
3 parent would do; I brought my 11-year old son, 62 pounds
4 visibly injured to court. It was his first day of
5 6th grade. I invoked the Illinois Domestic Violence Act
6 because (inaudible) safety. The judge agreed and found
7 prima facie case and entered an emergency order of
8 protection. For 17 days we complied. We followed every
9 directive. Then, retaliation began. The other side
10 filed a second order of protection. Act of false
11 allegations reaching back nearly a decade. Weaponizing
12 my domestic violence petition in converting a safety
13 matter into a family law dispute. Consolidation of
14 20-Ps (phonetic) into a family case stripped me of my
15 IDBA (phonetic) remedies and protections.

16 What followed was not justice, it was erosion;
17 emotional, mental and financial erosion. A GAL was
18 appointed suggested by the opposition, who had already
19 run-off two GALs. Her first call was not to the
20 children, it was to the opposing attorney. Her second
21 was over an hour long conversation with the abuser. I
22 received 40 minutes. Under Section 506, a GAL's duty
23 runs to the children, but, from the start, the alignment
24 was unmistakable. Despite a DCFS indication, emergency

1 room documentation of facial and head contusions and
2 (inaudible) utterances captured on police body cam, my
3 son and I spent nine months under assault, credibility
4 attacks, character assassinations and the GAL reported
5 that abandoned the entirety. She dismissed the ER
6 records of abuse as unremarkable and having no bearing
7 to the matter. She granted the abuser hindsight and
8 labeled my affidavits based safety concerns as
9 outlandish without basis of independent fact and had
10 little connectivity to reality. This was not
11 investigation, it was advocacy against a protective
12 parent.

13 The consolidation that this regard of trauma
14 and the GAL is about bias inflicted emotional harm,
15 mental harm and financial harm that is still being
16 pursued and it exposes a systemic failure. When the
17 record is unreliable and professionals untrust with your
18 children lack training and domestic violence the
19 protected parent becomes the target. This is what
20 Proposals 25-09 -- Proposal 26-07 are not reforms.
21 They're necessary safeguards to ensure no parent seeking
22 protection is ever punished for doing so.

23 I am not asking the Committee to decide my
24 case or determine whether any individual acted

1 improperly. I offer this experience because it
2 illustrates a broader systemic problem. When the
3 protective order proceedings is consolidated with a
4 custody case, the child safety issues can become
5 difficult to distinguish with competing criminal
6 allegations.

7 That brings me to Proposal 25-09. A docket
8 may show that a hearing occurred, but it does not
9 necessarily preserve the testimony. Exhibits,
10 objections, rulings, factual findings, statutory basis
11 for modifications are reasons for extending or
12 terminating protection. In my case, the Appellate
13 record initially contained docket materials without the
14 proceedings necessary to evaluate what occurred.
15 Reports of proceedings for multiple dates were filed
16 only later after the appeal had already been stated.

17 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: 1 more minute, sir.

18 MR. DUYVEJONCK: Thank you.

19 I ask the Committee to ensure that the
20 protective order portion, every hearing is continuously
21 recorded, clearly identified and preserved across
22 related dockets after consolidation. The record should
23 identify the case numbers, date, judge and resulting
24 order and should preserve findings, reasons and source

1 recordings with a ruling that may lead to contempt
2 sanctions or incarcerations. If a recording fails or
3 the parties should receive prompt notice so that the
4 record can be reconstructed and documents remain
5 available.

6 I, also, support Proposal 26-07, appointment
7 as the GAL does not by itself establish expertise in
8 domestic abuse control, trauma, child development,
9 disability and retaliatory litigation. Guardians ad
10 litem should receive meaningful and verifiable training
11 in those subjects as well as interviewing children.
12 Evaluating medical and child welfare records recognizing
13 minimization and victim blaming and maintaining
14 investigative independence.

15 Children may love, fear, defend or depend upon
16 the parent at the same time. A child's statement that
17 he or she is not afraid should, therefore, be evaluated
18 in context alongside other evidence, not treated as
19 dispositive.

20 For these reasons, I respectfully ask the
21 Committee to approve Proposal 25-09 and 26-07. These
22 proposals they will improve the process by which those
23 cases are decided.

24 Thank you.

1 THE COURT: Thank you very much, sir.

2 Any questions?

3 THE COURT: Thank you.

4 Next we have Cassandra Taylor Bridges who's
5 speaking on 26-07.

6 MS. BRIDGES: Good morning, everyone. I am
7 Cassandra Taylor Bridges; I am an Illinois certified
8 teacher of over 30 years. I am extremely concerned with
9 what has been happening in the Cook County system. What
10 I'm about to share is not what I've read, it's what I've
11 experienced and what I have paid to know over a million
12 dollars in pain.

13 I do support the amendment in terms of the
14 trainings. As I shared, I'm an Illinois certified
15 teacher. If I take courses -- two courses in medical,
16 would you allow me to perform heart surgery on you? If
17 I take two psychology classes, does that make me a
18 forensic psychologist or a psychologist? I am stating
19 that GALs have been given too much power beyond what
20 they are licensed to do. I am asking that in addition
21 to these trainings that we adopt a team, a team that
22 will consist of forensic psychologists, forensic
23 psychiatrists, pediatricians. We are in a system where
24 GALs -- I've experienced this -- the GAL told the

1 psychologist, I am not listening to you. The GAL was in
2 cahoots with the judge who was connected to the father.
3 In a perfect system, trainings are nice, trainings are
4 good. We should all receive trainings; judges,
5 attorneys. We are mixing criminal violence in the
6 family court system. We have family judges who are
7 making decisions and they cannot decipher who is the
8 victim and who is the perpetrator.

9 In my situation, I have a child who was beaten
10 with a baton. Forensic pathologists verified this. GAL
11 said, no, I'm not listening to you, I'm not listening to
12 any of the doctors, I'm not even listening to Rush
13 Hospital who filed a police report saying this child is
14 in imminent, emotional and psychological danger. What I
15 am stating is we can expand upon before training hours
16 of the GAL. We can incorporate a system that includes
17 the experts. I am an expert in education. I'm an
18 expert in child development. I was not listened to. No
19 one was listened to. Now, we are looking at empowering
20 the GALs even more.

21 This is a broken system. I am asking that the
22 forensic psychologists, the forensic psychiatrists, the
23 pediatrician, and none of these people are exposed to
24 the different litigants because, then, that's when

1 everything becomes fuzzy. The pediatrician -- You're
2 going to confuse the pediatrician, you're going to
3 confuse the forensic psychologist because now you have
4 all of these people in a room, some of them are
5 connected, we have judges who are able to push a button
6 and say I want to choose this GAL for this case. This
7 is hurting the system. This is hurting children. This
8 is hurting generations after generations.

9 I have a child who was sexually assaulted.
10 She is not being listened to because I have been put in
11 a situation where I am the perpetrator. Regardless of
12 the fact that I have had two orders of protections
13 against this perpetrator, I'm not the only victim to
14 this perpetrator, the perpetrator is being protected.
15 The child has been put in the care of this perpetrator
16 because of a failed system. So I am asking if we can,
17 please, expand upon what is being presented?

18 Are there any questions?

19 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Bridges.

20 Any questions?

21 Next we have Meghan Garnhart speaking on
22 Proposal 26-07.

23 MS. GARNHART: Good morning, Chairman Rogers and
24 members of the Committee. My name is Meghan Garnhart.

1 Although, I support Proposal 26-07, I don't think it's
2 nearly enough. You have my written comments, so I want
3 to focus on one question: What does it take for
4 families to trust a guardian ad litem? Proposal 26-07
5 recognizes that GALs need additional training. I agree
6 training matters, but I think that raises an even more
7 fundamental question: Are we asking attorneys to
8 perform a role that extends beyond attorneys'
9 professional expertise?

10 In my case, supervised parenting restrictions
11 began in 2018 after false allegations. More than eight
12 years later, they are still in place despite repeated
13 requests at attempts to remove them. They were
14 described as temporary, they even described the final
15 judgment as temporary, yet, no define step-down process
16 or therapeutic intervention has been -- or any movement
17 towards less restrictive parenting time has ever been
18 implemented, again, despite repeated requests.

19 As early as 2020, both my counselor and my
20 parenting time supervisor testified that they did not
21 believe supervision was necessary. Four years later,
22 the next time I was even given an opportunity to request
23 this again, my therapist, again, testified she was
24 unaware of any safety concerns, my business supervisor

1 testified the same. There was no need to continue
2 supervision, yet, the GAL, who has never observed me --
3 never observed me parenting my children and has never
4 visited my home, recommend that they continue.

5 This contrast is why the training question
6 matters. GALs are lawyers, yet, they are asked to make
7 recommendations involving trauma, mental health, child
8 development, family dynamics, parent-child
9 relationships, and whether those restrictions remain
10 therapeutically necessary. If we need to train lawyers
11 extensively in these disciplines so they can make
12 recommendations, why aren't qualified mental health or
13 therapeutic professionals performing that part of the
14 work? Legal expertise has an important place, but legal
15 expertise and therapeutic expertise are different.
16 Training can improve the current system, but training
17 should not substitute professional expertise.

18 Perhaps, the better model is
19 interdisciplinary; attorneys address legal and
20 procedural issues while qualified therapeutic
21 professionals assess family functioning, treatment
22 needs, safety and the past towards healthier
23 parent-child relationships. Restrictions should not
24 become the intervention. If protection is necessary,

1 the system should, also, ask what services, therapeutic
2 support or measurable steps can strengthen the parent
3 relationship with the child. A temporary restriction
4 should not continue year after year without therapeutic
5 purpose, measurable reassessment or a path forward.

6 I'm not asking you to decide whether the
7 recommendations in my case were right or wrong; that's
8 at the Appellate Court and it's currently there again.
9 I'm asking to you consider the process. When the
10 professionals with first-hand knowledge repeatedly
11 question restriction, what triggers reassessment? The
12 investigation must be capable of changing too. One of
13 my children reached adulthood while these restrictions
14 were in place. No step-down was ever implemented.
15 Seven years of 100 percent supervision and all of a
16 sudden you're an adult. There was no preparation for
17 that. I don't see how that can be in any child's best
18 interest. Children don't experience litigation and
19 procedural time, they experience childhood. Those years
20 cannot be returned. Training can, also, not solve the
21 problem without accountability. GALs receive
22 substantial protection from civil liability for Court
23 appointed functions. The stronger the immunity, the
24 stronger the alternative and accountability mechanism

1 must be. Although, Winnebago County records show more
2 than 3 million in payments to GAL expenditures since
3 2017, they told me they have no oversight authority.
4 Court administration told me the same because GALs are
5 private attorneys.

6 THE COURT: 1 more minute, Ms. Garnhart.

7 MS. GARNHART: Okay.

8 But GALs enter the lives because the Court
9 appoints them. They cannot rely on Court appointment
10 when empowering a GAL, they rely on private attorney
11 status when a family seeks who is responsible for
12 oversight. I submitted concerns to the ARDC and
13 received no response indicating they would be
14 investigated or addressed. I was directed back to my
15 family case. There my concerns were dismissed without a
16 hearing and filing restrictions followed. That's
17 currently what the Appellate Court.

18 At the cost of delay of accountability through
19 my friend Annetta Tonovich (phonetic). David Safocal
20 (phonetic) was appointed as her GAL. He was not only a
21 GAL, he was also a 22-year chairman of the selection
22 committee. Annetta alleged that he sexually assaulted
23 her during a home visit. She reported it, appealed, and
24 became Jane Doe in a criminal investigation as well as a

1 pursued federal litigation. Public recording indicates
2 ARDC received allegations concerning the assault in
3 March 2017; however, it did not release its public
4 disciplinary complaint until July 2020. Safocal was
5 later convicted -- this year -- for sexually assaulting
6 an associate at his firm, and Annetta's allegation was
7 not the basis for that conviction. Annetta died in 2025
8 before her litigation concluded. She never reunited
9 with her children. I was her friend and I watched her
10 run out of time.

11 So I ask the Committee to consider three
12 safeguards as it addresses GAL training. First, match
13 the professionals to the question. When the issue is
14 legal, use legal expertise. When the issue is trauma,
15 mental health, child development, family functioning or
16 therapeutic, require qualified clinical expertise. Not
17 simply additional training for an attorney.

18 Second, require reassessment in a path
19 forward. Temporary restrictions have a therapeutic
20 purpose. They should have goals. There should be a
21 path forward, a step-down. Not in my case.

22 Third, meaningful, independent accountability.
23 Families need somewhere outside the underlying case to
24 raise credible concerns about a GALs investigation,

1 ethics or compliance with professional standards.

2 While this proposal -- the approvals what GAL
3 is taught, it does not ask who should perform the work,
4 what expertise the work requires, and what happens when
5 standards are not followed. Better training alone is
6 not going to close this gap. Training matters, but
7 training cannot transform one profession into another.
8 Ethics and accountability gives those standards meaning.
9 Children only get one childhood. Our rules, our
10 accountability system they must operate with the same
11 urgency.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Any questions?

14 Next we have Mr. Eaton speaking on
15 Proposal 26-08.

16 MR. EATON: Good morning, Chairman Rogers and
17 members of the Committee. I hasten to add that the
18 issues I'm going to be addressing does not rise to the
19 importance or the emotion of what we just heard in the
20 past proposals, and I recognize that, but it's important
21 to us as -- the current chair of the ARDC review board
22 is here with me and we've had an issue in a couple of
23 cases we're here to seek a remedy, and that is where
24 there's a mistake in review board report.

1 Let me just backtrack one second. On our
2 current system, the hearing board hears matters that are
3 referred to by the required board, a complaint has been
4 filed, there's evidence presented, and, then, they make
5 recommendations as far as the sanctions is concerned.
6 The respondent or the administrator can appeal that to
7 the review board, and that's where we come in. I served
8 on the review board for nine years the last couple of
9 years as chair. So the record that we have before us in
10 the briefs that the parties file and the oral argument
11 are very important for us to make the right decision,
12 and, ultimately, for the Supreme Court to make the right
13 decision. Our reports go to the Supreme Court. If
14 someone has an exception to our report, they file those
15 exceptions with the Supreme Court and a response can be
16 filed with the Supreme Court, ultimately, it decides
17 whether or not there's enough evidence to support the
18 sanction, whether the sanction is appropriate.

19 We've had a couple of instances where,
20 unfortunately, we're all human, there's been a couple
21 material mistakes in a report based upon the reading of
22 the record. This happened recently -- when I say,
23 "recently," 2025 -- in a matter where I was actually on
24 the panel that issued the report, and, in that case, one

1 of the issues was whether or not the respondent should
2 have received a hearing because he asked for a
3 continuance, but he did not submit an affidavit, and the
4 continuance was denied. As a matter of fact, what
5 happened was, we reported in our report that he had
6 asked for a continuance, it was granted, and he was able
7 to go forward. That did not happen. What happened was
8 the Chair to the hearing board denied his motion because
9 there was no affidavit, and, then, allowed the hearing
10 to continue. That may seem like a small point, but it
11 was an important point in one of the issues that we had
12 before us. There were several. The administrator's
13 office did not like the fact that we ordered a new
14 trial, a new hearing on the matter, and they indicated
15 in their report to the Court when they filed exceptions
16 that not only was this a mistake, but affirming the
17 review board's report, in effect, declared that the
18 review board can misstate the record to support its
19 decision. Once we became aware of that allegation, I
20 personally sought, because I was chair of the review
21 board at that time, any avenue to correct that mistake
22 because it was a mistake. We were told that we could
23 not even issue a corrected report or a petition for
24 exception without or even before that.

1 So that's why we're here. It's important to
2 us, we believe that the accuracy of what the Supreme
3 Court ultimately has to decide that their report is
4 accurate and precedent. If one were to look at the
5 precedent of our review report, it has a mistake in it,
6 it has not been corrected. So we look to petition for
7 rehearing Rules 367 of the Supreme Court Rules. This is
8 different. We're not really seeking to vacate the
9 opinion, we're just seeking to correct it, and there has
10 to be notice to us within so many days, the issuance of
11 the report by either party that a mistake has been made,
12 the time following a petition for the Supreme Court is
13 stayed until we decide, and, if we made a mistake, we'll
14 correct it.

15 One other instance several years ago, the
16 hearing board recommended that in addition to a
17 suspension, there be a restitution. The review board
18 failed to include the restitution. The administrator
19 filed a motion to clarify, which is the only option
20 based on available, and, in fact, we issued a new
21 report, which included the restitution.

22 So this has happened on several occasions and
23 we think it's important that there be a rule addressing
24 this issue where it was brought to our attention and the

1 mistake can be changed in this material, and we
2 repeatedly say in the rule, like they do in Rule 367,
3 the most critical review board report are not favored
4 and will be allowed only in the most compelling
5 circumstances. It has to be (inaudible) material, we
6 tried to articulate both in the rule and in the
7 Committee comments.

8 So we respectfully ask this Court to adopt
9 that rule, so, if this happens in the future and it's
10 bound to, there's a method by which it could be
11 corrected for everybody's sake.

12 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Eaton.

13 Any questions?

14 Next we have Sarah Brown speaking on 25-09,
15 26-06, 26-07 and 26-08. Ms. Brown, you have 5 minutes
16 to present. I'll give you a warning at 1 minute.

17 MS. BROWN: Good morning. My name is Sarah Brown;
18 I stand before you today as a mother, a domestic
19 violence survivor, and an advocate who has spent years
20 fighting the system that actually protects families.

21 I recently had the honor of serving on the
22 Chicago Cook County Violence Against Women Task Force.
23 When we presented our final report to City Hall's Cook
24 County Board we laid a bare and -- I'm sorry -- we lay

1 bare and reality that many survivors knew. Our Court
2 system is fragmented, opaque and often fails to provide
3 the basic protections to survivors needed, but there's a
4 deeper more troubling layer to this. Right now the
5 Chief Judge office maintains a list of approved
6 guardians ad litem and child representatives. These
7 attorneys are appointed by judges and they are given the
8 poor -- power to access their own legal fees, fees that
9 families are forced to pay, often, while they are
10 already financially drained by the abuse they are
11 fleeing.

12 Who holds these attorneys accountable? When
13 we filed complaints with ARDC, they too often fall on
14 deaf ears. These attorneys operate as contractors for
15 the Circuit Court of Cook County and there is a total
16 lack of transparency regarding who was actually making
17 the decisions about who gets on the approved list.
18 There's no public record of the special committee
19 responsible for these appointments. It is a closed
20 system. And, when we are the survivors trapped inside
21 it, it feels less like a court of law and more like a
22 private club where the rules of accountability simply
23 don't apply.

24 This is why I'm here to demand the adoption of

1 these proposed amendments. They are direct, actionable
2 responses to the systematic barriers we identify in the
3 final report.

4 Regarding Rule 906, we are demanding that
5 (inaudible) approved list culture that prioritize
6 connections over competence. When a Court appoints a
7 GAL or a child rep, they are entrusting them with my
8 child's life, yet, as a survivor, I have seen these
9 professionals operate without a deep understanding of
10 domestic violence. This amendment, which mandates
11 4 hours of intensive specialized training or intimate
12 partner abuse, is a direct response to our reports
13 called for higher standards; however, they need
14 40 hours. Any advocate in the State of Illinois is
15 required to have 40 hours. We need advocates who are
16 experts, not just contractors who can spot the red flag
17 of words of control that an untrained eye would miss.

18 Regarding Rule 46, one of the most glaring
19 findings in our report was the difficulty survivors face
20 in assessing an accurate record. Not all courtrooms in
21 the Circuit Court of Cook County mans a court reporter.
22 For an abuser and for the attorneys who facilitate their
23 control, the lack of verbatim record is a weapon. By
24 mandating official record for all protective order

1 proceedings, we are finally bringing accountability into
2 the light. If a judge's ruling or a survivor's
3 testimony isn't captured, it effectively never happened.
4 This rule is a shield that survivors desperately need to
5 hold these Court-appointed contractors accountable.

6 Finally, Rule 753. Our report emphasizes the
7 need for transparency. When a report from a review
8 board contains a material mistake, it is not just a
9 clerical error, it is a failure of the system to get the
10 facts right. The proposed motion to correct is a vital
11 common sense fix. It allows us to correct the truth
12 without forcing a family to endure the trauma in the
13 mass of financial burden a full lengthy appeal.

14 To those of you who draft these rules, please
15 understand that these are not just technical amendments,
16 they are the building blocks of the reforms we demanded
17 in our task force report. We need to break open the
18 closed door, culture of approved lists, and hold these
19 Court-appointed contractors to a standard of excellence,
20 not just convenience.

21 I am asking you to adopt these changes. My
22 child deserves a Court that understands the reality of
23 our lives. Every survivor currently walking those halls
24 deserves to be heard, to be protected, and to have their

1 truth documented. We need GALs and child
2 representatives who are trained, records that are
3 accurate and exist and that finally prioritizes the
4 safety of children over the protection of its own
5 contractors. Please make these changes for the sake of
6 every family still fighting for their future.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Thank you.

9 Any questions?

10 Next we have Elder Diane Brown speaking on
11 25-09, 26-06, 26-07 and 26-08.

12 MS. BROWN: Good morning. I'm here today as a
13 grandmother, but I'm also here as a retired child
14 protective service CPS employee. I am a mandated
15 reporter. I spent my career on the frontline of child
16 welfare witnessing first-hand what it looks like when
17 the system works and the devastating lifelong
18 consequences when it fails. I've spent years walking
19 the halls of the Cook County domestic relation courts
20 holding my daughter's hand as she fought to keep herself
21 and my grandchild safe from an abuser. My daughter is a
22 domestic violence survivor, and, because they share a
23 child, she was forced to stay tethered to her abuser
24 through the court system.

1 After a career in Chicago Public School, I am
2 deeply troubled by the gap in the standard of care I see
3 in our Courts. In my years at CPS, we were required to
4 undergo rigorous, ongoing and in depth training. We had
5 to understand the nuisance of child development, the
6 psychology of trauma, and the complex of invisible
7 patterns of domestic abuse. We were trained to look
8 past the surface because we knew that a child's life
9 depended on our ability to see the truth. We were
10 taught that if we miss a sign, a child could be lost,
11 yet, in our domestic relation courts, I see guardian ad
12 litem, GALs and child representative people who hold a
13 power to decide where the child sleeps at night and who
14 they see operating with only the most minimal
15 superficial training on domestic violence. How is it
16 that a caseworker at CPS is held to a higher standard of
17 specialized training than an officer of the Court who
18 decides the fate of children in custody battles. It is
19 a dangerous inconsistency. This is why these amendments
20 are so vile.

21 When we look at Rule 906, we are demanding
22 that we stop settling for the bare minimum. We are
23 asking that every GAL and child representative, the very
24 people who are the eyes and ears of the Court be

1 mandated to complete 4 hours of intensive, specialized
2 training on intimate partner abuse. They need to
3 understand -- They need to understand how violence
4 impacts a child's brain and how post-separation abuse is
5 often the most dangerous time for a survivor. They need
6 to be experts. They shouldn't be learning on the job at
7 the expense of my grandchild's safety.

8 This is why Rule 46 is the backbone of
9 accountability. In my career I learned that if it isn't
10 documented, it doesn't exist. I have sat in courtrooms
11 when my daughter's safety was brushed aside because
12 there was no accurate record of the threats she faced.
13 The proposed amendment to Rule 46 mandates that every
14 protected order proceeding be captured by an official
15 record. It ensures that the GAL recommendations, the
16 judge's findings and the survivors' testimony are
17 preserved. It creates a record that cannot be ignored,
18 minimized or forgotten. It forces the system to be
19 accountable to every word spoken in that courtroom.

20 And, finally, Rule 753, in my years of service
21 I've learned that one mistake, one misstated date, one
22 misquoted fact can lead to a child being placed in an
23 unsafe home. The fact that we currently lack a simple
24 efficient way to correct material mistakes and the

1 record is unacceptable. The proposed motion to correct
2 a process is a common sense of safeguard. It allows the
3 truth to be corrected immediately without forcing
4 families to endure the trauma and expense of a full
5 lengthy appeal just to fit a factual error.

6 To the people in this room, these might look
7 like technical rules, but, to me, they are the
8 difference between a system that acts as a true guardian
9 for children and a system that is merely going through
10 the motion. I am calling on you to adopt these changes.
11 We need to raise the bar. We need GALs and child
12 representatives who are trained as vigilant as the best
13 child welfare professional. We need records that are
14 precise and we need a system that values accuracy over
15 convenience. Please make these changes. My grandchild
16 and every child currently caught in the years of this
17 system deserves a Court that knows how to protect them.

18 I am asking the Committee to establish
19 mandatory training, enforceable accountability and
20 meaningful oversight of guardians ad litem, GALs and
21 other child appointed child representing. I am
22 providing copies of my training showing that subjects
23 covered in the time required I urge the Committee to use
24 them as a foundation for mandatory annual trainings for

1 GALs and child representatives. I am still an employee
2 for CPS and I still have to take these trainings every
3 year. A law degree alone does not prepare someone to
4 understand childhood trauma, disability, special
5 education needs or signs that a child may be in danger.
6 Attorneys with recommendations can determine where a
7 child lives and whether they -- that child feels safe
8 should not be held to a lower standard than school
9 employees.

10 My grandson even wrote a heartbreaking letter
11 to the judge saying that all he wanted was to be a child
12 and that he did not want to go to his father's home. A
13 child should not have a -- have to beg a Court to let
14 him be a child, and, eventually, he needed therapy.

15 THE COURT: 1 more minute.

16 MS. BROWN: Who is a mandated reporter at CPS?
17 Every teacher, teacher's aid, substitute teacher, school
18 principal, administrator, school nurses, social workers,
19 cultures and recreation programs have vendors,
20 contractors and adult volunteers. We must take these
21 trainings every time we step foot in Chicago Public
22 Schools is mandatory, and, once again, a law degree
23 alone does not prepare someone to understand childhood
24 trauma.

1 I thank you for listening.

2 THE COURT: Thank you.

3 We have one more speaker, Ms. Retrinda Alley,
4 speaking on Proposals 25-09 and 26-07.

5 MS. ALLEY: I am Retrinda Alley and I am a
6 self-represented litigant in a domestic relation case
7 here in Cook County, Case No. 2010 D 080864. I thank
8 you for the opportunity to speak.

9 I asked to be here in person because these
10 proposals are not (inaudible) to my life, they are my
11 life. A guardian ad litem has been appointed in my
12 case, and, under current rules, that person was never
13 required to complete any training in intimate partner
14 domestic abuse before taking that role. I have lived
15 the consequences of this system that asks someone to
16 weigh in on my child's best interest without first
17 understanding how domestic abuse and control actually
18 works. So Proposal 26-07 would close that gap by
19 requiring 4 hours of training before appointment, and I
20 ask that you-all adopt that.

21 I, also, raise something that this Committee
22 should not overlook. A GAL's recommendation is only
23 advisory. Illinois law is clear. The judge is never
24 bound by it, that means, training the GAL, but not the

1 judge, trains the advisor and not the decision-maker.
2 We can use common sense on that. Just two weeks ago the
3 governor signed a law requiring officers -- police
4 officers to be trained before they can even administer
5 legality on domestic violence calls. If we require that
6 an officer assessing danger at the moment, we should
7 require that of a judge deciding a child's future.

8 I am asking that you, also, recommend that
9 judges complete equal or greater training in intimate
10 partner abuse, at least, or as often as you require of
11 the GALs.

12 In my own case no court reporter was present
13 at the hearing that decided my order of protection. I
14 raised the same concerns earlier this year and my
15 testimony to the Cook County Task Force for Violence
16 Against Women. Without a verbatim record, there is no
17 way to correct the record or meaningfully appeal.
18 Proposal 25-09 would fix that requiring a stenographic
19 or electronic record in every domestic violence
20 proceeding even when like mine it folded into another
21 case rather than filed on its own.

22 The governor also signed a law closing a
23 similar kind of gap making sure emergency orders of
24 protections stay in effect until the final order is

1 actually served because lawmakers understood that even a
2 brief gap in protection creates real risk. I am asking
3 this Committee to close this record-keeping gap in
4 Proposal 25-09 with that same urgency. These are modest
5 and overly changes. They would not undue what I've
6 already been through. I'm still dealing with this
7 today, but it could help families moving forward, it
8 could help me moving forward in my case. I'm not sure,
9 though, because my daughter has two more years until
10 she's 18 and I hope I don't run out of time. That is a
11 thought that I've had. The opposition, in my case, has
12 a warrant out for his arrest today, but I'm still in
13 court dealing with GAL fees and a whole lot of mess and
14 chaos. It's unnecessary. I think we can fix some
15 things and I encourage you-all to adopt these proposals,
16 and thank you for your time.

17 THE COURT: Thank you.

18 Any questions?

19 That concludes the public hearing. I want to
20 thank everyone who came and spoke today on these very
21 important proposals.

22 We will stand adjourn.

23 (11:45 a.m. proceedings concluded.)
24

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2 COUNTY OF COOK) SS.
3

4 Michelle M. Scalise, being first duly sworn,
5 on oath says that he is a Certified Shorthand Reporter
6 doing business in the City of Chicago, County of Cook,
7 and the State of Illinois.

8 That she reported in shorthand the proceedings
9 had at the foregoing public hearing;

10 And that the foregoing is a true and accurate
11 excerpt of the proceedings had at the said public
12 hearing.

13
14
15 Michelle M. Scalise

16 Michelle M. Scalise, CSR
CSR No: 084-004616
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13:18,19 22:2,18,24 25:17 26:16 27:2 30:19 42:15 62:8 account 14:17 16:6 20:12 22:20, 23 26:17 accountability 4:23 54:21,24 55:18 56:22 57:8,10 62:22 64:1 67:9 68:19 accountable 62:12 64:5 67:19 accounts 23:21 accuracy 41:5 60:2 68:14 accurate 21:11 60:4 63:20 65:3 67:12 acknowledge 3:2 40:1 acknowledges 28:8 act 3:24 9:7 13:2,3,12 16:2 19:17 20:24 40:22 45:5,10 acted 46:24 action 15:21 31:3 actionable	63:1 actions 6:7 13:4 active 15:20 29:16 activities 14:19 acts 68:8 actual 15:4 ad 31:24 32:4, 7,9,11,20,24 34:17,21 35:9,14,17,21 36:5,8,12,18 39:14,20 41:20 42:3,7, 14 43:1,7,8, 11,18,22,24 48:9 52:4 62:6 66:11 68:20 70:11 add 27:1 57:17 addenda 44:12 adding 35:12 addition 27:9 49:20 60:16 additional 36:19 52:5 56:17 Additionally 15:24 23:15 30:15 address 19:7 22:1 26:10 27:4,6,18 30:22 31:18 33:22 40:12	53:19 addressed 28:23 55:14 addresses 56:12 addressing 57:18 60:23 adequate 8:7 adjourn 72:22 adjudicate 11:11 administer 71:4 administratio n 55:4 administrator 58:6 60:18 69:18 administrator' s 59:12 adolescent 39:4 adopt 44:18 49:21 61:8 64:21 68:10 70:20 72:15 adoption 6:16,21 62:24 adult 39:1 40:14 42:4 54:16 69:20 adulthood 54:13 adults 43:23 adversely 19:24	advisor 71:1 advisory 70:23 advocacy 46:11 advocate 32:16 61:19 63:14 advocates 11:14 21:8 31:23 32:10 63:15 affect 34:24 affecting 41:15 affidavit 59:3, 9 affidavits 46:8 affirming 59:16 afford 5:15,16 afraid 30:9 39:7 48:17 agency 43:5 agenda 3:6 agent 20:6 aggressively 18:17 agree 8:4 25:6 52:5 agreed 22:7 25:12,22 45:6 aid 3:16 5:23 21:8,23 31:23 36:11 69:17	aiding 36:10 Aimee 40:8 Ainat 11:2 21:21 aisle 22:7 Albrecht 40:8, 10 Alderwoman 37:12,22 alignment 45:23 alines 12:17 allegation 42:17 56:6 59:19 allegations 44:24 45:11 47:6 52:11 56:2 alleged 34:20 55:22 Alley 70:3,5 allocation 34:9,12 allowed 13:13 18:7 20:12 25:2,4 28:12 59:9 61:4 allowing 31:2 alongside 48:18 alternative 54:24 amend 3:11 Amending 4:4 amendment
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9:6 12:10 13:11 28:6 30:16,20 35:19 49:13 63:10 67:13 amendments 6:21 28:24 31:16 34:2 63:1 64:15 66:19 amount 25:7 35:14 anger 38:20 Annetta 55:19,22 56:7 Annetta's 56:6 announces 17:20 annual 68:24 answers 23:11 27:1 anxiety 38:21 apologize 44:11 appeal 5:13, 15 17:20 18:4,9 47:16 58:6 64:13 68:5 71:17 appealed 55:23 appeals 3:20 4:3 5:9 8:5,6 18:15 appearance 13:7 26:22 30:2,4,17	appeared 5:11 18:5 appears 29:6 39:10 Appellate 3:22 7:23 18:5 47:12 54:8 55:17 application 29:12 apply 62:23 appointed 32:9 34:1,11 45:18 54:23 55:20 62:7 68:21 70:11 appointment 34:5 48:6 55:9 70:19 appointments 62:19 appoints 55:9 63:6 appropriately 9:5 approval 35:19 approvals 57:2 approve 39:21 48:21 approved 33:23 34:6 39:20 62:5,17 63:5 64:18 approximately 4:12 33:16	ARDC 55:12 56:2 57:21 62:13 areas 8:11 argument 58:10 arrange 5:8 arrangements 35:1 arrest 21:1 72:12 articulate 61:6 asks 70:15 assassination s 46:4 assault 46:3 56:2 assaulted 51:9 55:22 assaulting 56:5 assert 13:19 22:10,20 26:8 asserted 26:9 assess 5:12 34:19 53:21 assessing 63:20 71:6 asset 12:14 assets 11:18 12:4,9,13,21, 24 13:15 14:13,16 15:6 17:2,14 18:2 19:10 20:21 22:19 24:10,	16 25:13 26:4 assist 32:5 assistance 32:18 associate 31:12 56:6 assorted 31:1 assume 44:7 atmosphere 40:3 attachment 20:18 attacks 46:4 attempts 52:13 attend 35:18 attending 3:4 attention 38:21 60:24 attorney 20:23 34:5,7 45:20 55:10 56:17 attorneys 11:15 14:5 21:9 31:22 32:8 34:4 35:13 37:4 50:5 52:7 53:19 55:5 62:7,12,14 63:22 69:6 attorneys' 13:9 27:8,11, 14,16 52:8 August 45:2 authority 55:3	automatically 10:3 16:3 availability 7:17 avenue 59:21 average 29:16 avoid 10:23 16:13 30:3 aware 14:16 16:1 35:11 59:19 B B-2 26:18 back 7:20 23:23 29:2 38:6 45:11 55:14 backbone 67:8 backdrop 30:19 backtrack 58:1 balance 11:20 12:19 13:17 25:10 28:7 29:16 32:12 balancing 21:12 bank 14:17 16:6 20:4,8 22:19,23 23:10 bankruptcy 12:18 14:18 banks 20:1
--	--	--	---	---

bans 20:24	bench 22:6	briefs 58:10	called 31:24 63:13	71:12,21 72:8,11
bar 68:11	benefit 26:11	bringing 64:1	calling 68:10	cases 4:16,22 5:10,22 6:19 7:2,12 9:14 10:21 28:15 29:21 30:18 32:10,13 33:9,10,12, 17,19 34:2 36:9 37:5,10 48:23 57:23
bare 61:24 62:1 66:22	benefits 25:6	brings 41:19 47:7	calls 71:5	
barrier 5:6	Benna 3:8,15	broad 6:14	Calumet 37:13,20,23 38:1	
barriers 63:2	bias 46:14	broader 47:2	cam 46:2	
based 8:7 46:8 58:21 60:20	birthday 12:7	broken 50:21	candidly 16:21 18:17	
basic 5:3 23:17 62:3	blaming 48:13	brought 33:21 45:3 60:24	capabilities 8:21	caseworker 66:16
basis 15:7 17:4,17 46:9 47:10 56:7	Blitt 11:6	Brown 61:14, 15,17 65:10, 12 69:16	capable 54:12	Cassandra 49:4,7
baton 50:10	block 20:3	bruise 38:9	captured 46:2 64:3 67:14	caught 68:16
battle 41:7 43:19	blocks 64:16	brushed 67:11	car 16:19 23:4	causing 38:23
battles 66:18	board 35:22 57:21,24 58:2,3,7,8 59:8,18,21 60:16,17 61:3,24 64:8	building 9:16, 17,19 64:16	card 24:22 29:18	Center 9:22
bearing 46:6	board's 59:17	built 9:16,17	cards 29:12, 15,17	Century 11:21
beaten 50:9	body 46:2	burden 64:13	care 51:15 66:2	certified 7:13 20:8 49:7,14
beef 26:5	bond 18:5	burdens 39:12	career 65:15 66:1 67:9	chair 31:10,17 37:23 57:21 58:9 59:8,20
beefed-up 24:21	bonding 39:3	Bureau 29:15	carry 39:11, 12	chairman 3:1 8:3 11:1 21:14,20 23:24 24:4,8, 13 25:9,16,21 26:12 27:20, 21 28:2 29:1 31:5 36:16 37:11,15 40:7,10 44:10,19 47:17 51:23 55:21 57:13, 16 65:8
beg 69:13	bound 61:10 70:24	burnout 36:12	case 4:8,19 6:7 9:14 14:16 16:21 21:1 33:15 35:9 40:13,14 41:10 45:7,14 46:24 47:4, 12,23 51:6 52:10 54:7 55:15 56:21, 23 58:24 70:6,7,12	
began 45:9 52:11	box 12:1 41:22	business 14:3 52:24		
behalf 29:4 37:13,19	brain 67:4	businessman 29:7		
behavior 32:24 33:1 39:4	branch 20:3	button 51:5		
believed 21:11	branches 10:9	C		
believes 12:12 13:16 30:19 36:7	brand 27:9	cahoots 50:2		
	break 64:17	California 7:22,24		
	Bridges 49:4, 6,7 51:19	call 3:8 12:4 31:6 45:19		
	briefly 27:22			

challenged 41:5	64:22 65:1, 13,15,23 66:5,10,12, 13,23 67:22 68:11,13,16, 21 69:1,5,7, 11,13,14	citation 12:12,20,22, 23 13:6,8,14 15:17 18:2,3 19:15,18,19 20:4,8,15,16, 21 22:18,22 26:4 28:10	clerk 64:9 clerks 11:14 client 6:11 16:24 18:6,9, 20 client's 17:2 clients 5:23, 24 21:9 Clifford 31:7, 9 36:16,21 37:6,17 clinical 56:16 close 57:6 70:18 72:3 closed 62:19 64:18 closing 71:22 club 62:22 code 12:9,15 14:6 17:9 19:13 coercion 42:23 coercive 33:5 41:20 42:10 coincided 29:11 collaborated 21:11 collaboration 11:13 20:23 collect 24:15 28:18 collected 24:11 collection	23:6 collections 22:4 college 16:18 35:20 comfort 36:10 Commandments 12:2 comment 27:4 comments 6:13,15 27:18 52:2 61:7 Commission 11:3,9 12:12 13:16 22:2 26:16 30:19 commissioned 8:13 commitments 5:1 committed 36:5 committee 6:13,17,20 8:13,14 11:13 22:3,5,17 31:7,11,15,18 32:7 33:23 35:21 36:4,5, 6 37:16,24 40:11 44:17 46:23 47:19 48:21 51:24 55:22 56:11 57:17 61:7 62:18 68:18, 23 70:21 72:3 common
change 6:15 12:6 15:19 16:12,15 17:24 26:1,2, 3,5 36:14 38:22 40:6 41:23 42:21 changed 24:24 61:1 changing 54:12 chaos 72:14 character 46:4 charged 32:12 charges 6:6 Charlton 12:1 Chase 20:2,8 checked 41:22 Chicago 3:16, 18 5:23 21:8, 23 61:22 66:1 69:21 Chief 62:5 child 16:18 32:17 34:2,8, 12 35:1 37:5 38:22 39:5,7, 10,12,18,19 42:22 43:15 47:4 48:8,12 50:9,13,18 51:9,15 53:7 54:3 56:15 62:6 63:7	child's 39:17 48:16 54:17 63:8 66:8 67:4 70:16 71:7 childhood 54:19 57:9 69:4,23 children 32:15,23 33:6,12,18 37:19 38:3, 15,18 39:12 43:23 44:24 45:20,23 46:18 48:11, 15 51:7 53:3 54:13,18 56:9 57:9 65:4 66:18 68:9 choose 51:6 circuit 31:13 33:13 62:15 63:21 circulation 29:16 circumstance 14:22 16:20 circumstances 15:5 16:22 18:16 22:16 28:5 29:23 61:5	citations 12:4,9,14 13:10 14:12 15:5 19:23 cite 7:12 City 37:13,20, 23 38:1 61:23 civil 3:17 9:8 14:6 17:9 21:23 40:21 54:22 claim 24:6 claimant 24:4, 13 25:17 claims 11:20 29:5,10,19 30:18,22 clarifications 29:24 clarified 30:1 clarifies 12:23 13:7,8 clarify 30:3 60:19 clarifying 12:18 30:20 clarity 22:11 classes 49:17 clear 36:17 44:1 70:23	clerk 64:9 clerks 11:14 client 6:11 16:24 18:6,9, 20 client's 17:2 clients 5:23, 24 21:9 Clifford 31:7, 9 36:16,21 37:6,17 clinical 56:16 close 57:6 70:18 72:3 closed 62:19 64:18 closing 71:22 club 62:22 code 12:9,15 14:6 17:9 19:13 coercion 42:23 coercive 33:5 41:20 42:10 coincided 29:11 collaborated 21:11 collaboration 11:13 20:23 collect 24:15 28:18 collected 24:11 collection	23:6 collections 22:4 college 16:18 35:20 comfort 36:10 Commandments 12:2 comment 27:4 comments 6:13,15 27:18 52:2 61:7 Commission 11:3,9 12:12 13:16 22:2 26:16 30:19 commissioned 8:13 commitments 5:1 committed 36:5 committee 6:13,17,20 8:13,14 11:13 22:3,5,17 31:7,11,15,18 32:7 33:23 35:21 36:4,5, 6 37:16,24 40:11 44:17 46:23 47:19 48:21 51:24 55:22 56:11 57:17 61:7 62:18 68:18, 23 70:21 72:3 common

64:11 68:2 71:2 communication 43:1 community 14:3 companies 28:19 comparison 41:6 compelling 61:4 competence 63:6 competent 34:15 competing 47:5 complaint 56:4 58:3 complaints 62:13 complete 67:1 70:13 71:9 complex 32:13 66:6 compliance 57:1 complied 45:8 compliment 19:12 compliments 13:11 16:12 30:16 comply 13:9	component 5:3 comports 13:1 computers 8:20 9:22 concentrating 38:22 concept 30:5 concern 10:13,14 17:15 35:15 concerned 49:8 58:5 concerns 15:10 21:3 46:8 52:24 55:12,15 56:24 71:14 concluded 56:8 72:23 concludes 72:19 conclusion 43:5 conduct 41:1 conducted 31:22 confirming 12:20 conflict 33:4 39:24 42:4 confuse 51:2, 3 connected 50:2 51:5 connections	63:6 connectivity 46:10 consent 43:4 consequences 14:20 23:2 28:14 65:18 70:15 consideration 36:13 considered 39:6 consist 49:22 consistently 9:4,23 consolidated 40:14,17 47:3 consolidation 45:13 46:13 47:22 constantly 10:3 consumer 11:14 16:5 19:24 20:10 21:8,9,22 22:2 29:14,19 consumers 11:16 14:2 contact 9:8 contained 47:13 contempt 20:17 21:2 40:21 48:1 content 41:1 context 21:5	23:24 48:18 continuance 59:3,4,6 continue 53:1,4 54:4 59:10 continuing 34:6 36:2,6 continuously 47:20 contract 9:8 contractors 62:14 63:16 64:5,19 65:5 69:20 contrast 53:5 control 14:19 33:5 41:21 42:10 48:8 63:17,23 70:17 contusions 46:1 convenience 64:20 68:15 conversation 45:21 converting 45:12 convicted 56:5 conviction 56:7 Cook 3:17 8:20 9:6,9,11, 15,20 10:7,9, 18 14:10 19:5,8 21:24	26:8 36:24 49:9 61:22,23 62:15 63:21 65:19 70:7 71:15 copies 68:22 corporation 14:18 correct 10:16 24:2,6,11,17 59:21 60:9,14 64:10,11 67:24 68:1 71:17 corrected 59:23 60:6 61:11 68:3 cost 8:9 18:10 55:18 costs 27:12 counsel 34:11 counselor 52:19 counterpart 12:15 counties 4:13 8:18 county 3:17 4:8,18,19 8:20 9:15,20 10:9,13 13:4 14:10 19:2,5, 6,7,8 20:20, 22 21:24 26:8 31:13 33:9,17 36:24 49:9 55:1 61:22,24 62:15 63:21 65:19 70:7 71:15
--	---	---	--	--

couple 57:22 58:8,19,20	Court's 12:18 18:13 42:8	credible 56:24	cycle 43:19	debtor 13:1 22:10,14,17 23:3,16 25:8 27:17
courses 34:6 35:4,19,23,24 36:4 49:15	Court- appointed 64:5,19	credit 29:11, 12,15,17,18	D	debtor's 22:19,20,23
court 3:3,11, 23 4:1,9,15 5:1,2,5,8,15 6:3,4 7:5,8, 13,17,18,22, 24 8:10,14,21 10:8 11:3,14 12:2,18 13:7, 10,14,20 14:12,20 15:2,15,20 16:4,23 17:1, 16,21,22 18:6,7 20:16 21:2 22:9,24 23:18 26:15 27:13 28:5 29:4,10 30:4, 9 31:3,7,10, 16,18 32:2,6, 19 33:21 34:11 35:20 36:4 37:9 40:17 41:17 45:4 49:1,3 50:6 51:19 54:8,22 55:4, 6,8,9,17 58:12,13,15, 16 59:15 60:3,7,12 61:8,12 62:1, 15,21 63:6,21 64:22 65:24 66:17,24 68:17 69:13, 15 70:2 71:12 72:13,17	courthouse 9:15 14:21	creditor 14:11 20:4 27:16	Daley 9:22	debtors 15:11 20:24 21:24 23:5
	courtroom 17:2 30:10 40:24 67:19	creditor's 23:13	damage 29:9	
	courtrooms 8:19 22:4 63:20 67:10	creditors 11:8,15 13:18 14:2 21:12 31:3	danger 18:9 50:14 69:5 71:6	decade 45:11
	courts 3:12 6:17 29:20 30:13 31:20 65:19 66:3,11	credits 36:2	dangerous 40:3 66:19 67:5	December 41:11
	cover 16:16	crime 5:20	date 22:8 30:2,5,6,7 34:5 47:23 67:21	decide 41:16 46:23 54:6 60:3,13 66:13
	covered 68:23	criminal 6:6 33:15 47:5 50:5 55:24	dates 47:15	decided 48:23 71:13
	CPS 65:14 66:3,16 69:2, 16	critical 3:23 4:4 34:23 61:3	daughter 65:21 72:9	decides 58:16 66:18
	Crawford 3:8, 9,15 7:13 8:12 9:12 10:14,16 11:1	cross 43:18	daughter's 65:20 67:11	deciding 71:7
	create 3:12 4:13 30:20	cross- referencing 26:20	David 44:11, 16 55:19	decipher 7:9 40:2 50:7
	created 5:5 32:7	culture 63:5 64:18	day 14:13 18:19 45:4	decision 7:22, 24 18:8 25:22 35:8 58:11,13 59:19
	creates 19:4,9 28:12 67:17 72:2	cultures 69:19	days 14:9,24 45:8 60:10	decision- maker 71:1
	creating 11:10	cumulatively 23:21	DCFS 45:24	decisions 3:22 32:3,6 50:7 62:17
	credibility 43:5 46:3	current 33:13 34:3 53:16 57:21 58:2 70:12	deaf 62:14	declared 59:17
		custody 34:2, 8,12 35:1 38:16 43:9 47:4 66:18	deal 12:3 18:10,20	decreased 4:1
			dealing 72:6, 13	dedicated 4:15
			dealt 18:16	
			debt 21:1 22:3,4 23:6 29:19	

deduction 13:2,3 18:1,2	denied 5:16 59:4,8	35:15	disagree 28:2	47:7,13
deep 63:9	Dentons 3:21	development 48:8 50:18 53:8 56:15 66:5	disciplinary 56:4	dockets 47:22
deeper 42:13 62:4	department 20:5	diagnosis 43:4	disciplines 53:11	doctors 50:12
deeply 5:11 66:2	depend 4:8 7:3 48:15	Diane 65:10	discover 20:21	doctrine 14:16
default 30:3	dependable 4:22	died 56:7	discovery 11:18 12:4,9, 12,14,21 13:14 14:13 18:2 22:19 26:4	documentatio n 46:1
defend 30:11 48:15	depended 66:9	difference 40:2 43:13 68:8	discuss 15:10 16:22	documented 42:24 65:1 67:10
defendant 14:14 15:4,6 17:8 18:22 19:4,6 30:1	depends 4:18	difficult 22:16 32:12 36:8 47:5	discussed 22:22	documents 48:4
defendants 11:18 14:3,6, 22 19:3	depleted 24:10,16,19 25:17	difficulty 38:21 63:19	dishonest 39:8	Doe 55:24
define 52:15	depth 66:4	dig 42:13	dishonesty 43:3	dog 29:9
defining 12:14	deserves 64:22,24 68:17	digging 9:3	dismissed 8:6 46:5 55:15	dollars 28:16 49:12
definite 40:18	designed 35:16	dilemma 5:24	dispositive 48:19	domestic 3:19,24 8:14 9:7,15,21 31:7,11,19 32:9,18,21,22 33:3,9,10,14, 15,18,20,24 34:1,7,18,20, 22 35:3,16 36:3,9 37:10, 24 38:8 39:13,15 44:24 45:5,12 46:18 48:8 61:18 63:10 65:19,22 66:7,11,15 70:6,14,17 71:5,19
degree 69:3, 22	desperately 64:4	dire 23:2	dispute 45:13	domesticate 20:10
delay 55:18	dessert 35:12	direct 63:1,12	disrespectful 39:7	dominating 12:1
delayed 23:12	destitute 23:6	directed 55:14	distinguish 42:4 47:5	
Delays 23:1	determine 46:24 69:6	directive 45:9	districts 10:1	
delineated 34:14	determined 22:9	directly 34:24 38:16	division 4:19 9:21	
demand 62:24	determines 10:21	director 3:16 21:22	divorce 33:10,12,16 37:9	
demande 64:16	devastating 65:17	disabilities 44:24	docket 43:21	
demanding 63:4 66:21	developed	disability 48:9 69:4		
denial 5:11		disabled 40:14 43:23		

door 64:18	37:23 39:15	emotional	46:21 47:19	48:17
doubling-down 17:4	50:17 69:5	39:11 45:17	ensures 4:7	Evaluating
doubt 6:10	effect 14:15	46:14 50:14	67:15	48:12
draft 64:14	59:17 71:24	emotionally	enter 55:8	eventually
drained 62:10	effectively	32:12	entered 13:5	69:14
due 4:23	14:14 41:14	emphasizes	24:2,15 45:7	everybody's
duties 42:16	64:3	23:15 64:6	entering 18:3	61:11
44:1	effects 39:5	employee	enters 16:4,8	evidence
duty 45:22	efficiency	65:14 69:1	20:19 28:5	40:20 42:2,19
Duyvejonck	22:12	employees	entire 8:10	48:18 58:4,17
44:11,16,17,	efficient	28:18 69:9	entitled 14:23	exacerbates
20 47:18	67:24	empowering	entrusting	10:19
dynamics	effort 11:9	50:19 55:10	63:7	exact 5:24
32:20 36:11	efforts 13:2	encourage	entry 15:17	7:24
53:8	15:9	30:18 44:17,	equal 5:17	exceeding
	Elder 65:10	21 72:15	71:9	35:18
	elderly 43:23	encourages	ER 46:5	excellence
	electronic	13:10	erase 42:17	64:19
	3:14 4:15	end 28:3 32:6	43:5	exception
E	6:23 7:7,19	endanger	erosion	58:14 59:24
	8:1,9,23 9:18	33:3	45:16,17	exceptions
e-mail 26:9	10:10 71:19	endure 64:12	error 28:5	30:15 58:15
earlier 5:18	electronically	68:4	64:9 68:5	59:15
71:14	7:9	enforce 19:5	escalating 6:2	excess 17:13
early 52:19	eliminates	24:9 25:23	essential 41:8	excessively
ears 42:8	30:5	enforceable	essentially	23:20
62:14 66:24	eliminating	6:24 68:19	6:12	excited 37:16
easier 18:24	14:14	enforced 4:7	establish 48:7	execute 18:7
Eaton 57:14,	Elvis 11:23	enforcement	68:18	20:20
16 61:12	emancipation	12:19 14:9	established	execution
echo 43:20	43:10,11	17:7 18:14	37:24	17:19 40:18
economic	emergency	22:11 25:11	ethics 57:1,8	exemption
22:16	9:10 15:22	28:13	evaluate 4:3	11:11 13:12,
EDCON 35:4	45:7,24 71:23	enhances	47:14	20 15:16
education	emotion	34:3	evaluated	16:2,3 20:13
34:6,8 35:21,	57:19	ensure 7:2		22:21,24
22 36:2,6		16:9 34:10,17		23:1,9,13

24:17,20,22, 23,24 26:6 28:16	experiencing 32:14	66:24	families 32:3, 13,15 33:3 38:3 44:1 52:4 56:23 61:20 62:9 68:4 72:7	file 14:24 18:1,24 19:2, 3 23:10 28:21 30:1 58:10,14
exemptions 13:12 22:10, 13 23:16,19 24:19 25:5 26:8,9	expert 50:17, 18	F		filed 6:6 14:8 18:4 45:10 47:15 50:13 58:4,16 59:15 60:19 62:13 71:21
Exhibits 47:9	expertise 48:7 52:9 53:14,15,17 56:14,16 57:4	face 5:23 21:4 23:6 63:19	family 7:23 22:14 32:10 33:10 35:2 37:9,10 38:16 39:2 43:14 44:3 45:1,13, 14 50:6 53:8, 21 55:11,15 56:15 64:12 65:6	filing 28:13 55:16
exist 65:3 67:10	experts 50:17 63:16 67:6	faced 67:12		final 25:21 52:14 61:23 63:3 71:24
existing 13:2 14:21 16:8 21:5	explain 38:19	facial 46:1		finally 64:1,6 65:3 67:20
exists 4:12 5:3 9:2 28:4 41:4,16	explicit 23:8	facie 45:7		Finance 29:14
expand 50:15 51:17	exploded 29:12	facilitate 63:22		financial 7:3 9:1 33:6 45:17 46:15 64:13
expanding 8:9	exposed 50:23	fact 12:6 17:16 19:22 31:23 46:9 51:12 59:4,13 60:20 67:22, 23	fate 66:18	financially 62:10
expediency 22:12	exposes 46:16	facts 40:16 43:19 64:10	father 38:14 39:21,22 50:2	find 6:9
expedited 23:7	extend 43:22	factual 47:10 68:5	father's 69:12	findings 40:20 41:12, 13 47:10,24 63:19 67:16
expended 18:10	extended 41:10	factually 32:13	father's 69:12	firm 11:6,7 18:15 56:6
expenditures 55:2	extending 47:11	failed 51:16 60:18	father's 69:12	firms 18:16
expense 67:7 68:4	extends 52:8	failing 42:1	father's 69:12	first-hand 54:10 65:16
expenses 17:13	extension 6:3,10	fails 20:16 43:24 48:2 62:2 65:18	father's 69:12	fit 42:5 68:5
experience 18:12 34:15 47:1 54:18,19	extensive 39:16	failure 13:9 46:16 64:9	father's 69:12	fix 64:11 71:18 72:14
experienced 49:11,24	extensively 53:11	fair 27:2 44:23	father's 69:12	
	extent 18:7	fairness 4:23	father's 69:12	
	extremely 32:1,2 36:7 49:8	fall 7:20 62:13	father's 69:12	
	eye 63:17	false 45:10 52:11	father's 69:12	
	eyes 42:8		father's 69:12	

flag 63:16	frame 12:10 16:5 28:12	G	geography 7:3 10:20	great 27:23
flashes 38:13	frames 23:8	Gaines 11:7	give 19:17,18 27:13 32:4 61:16	greater 13:19 21:5 71:9
fleeing 62:11	free 16:7 21:23 42:23	GAL 41:20 45:17 46:4,14 48:7 49:24 50:1,10,16 51:6 53:2 55:2,10,20,21 56:12 57:2 63:7 66:23 67:15 70:24 72:13	giving 19:20 32:1	greatly 17:13
floor 23:23	freed 16:11	GAL's 45:22 70:22	glaring 63:18	groceries 16:10 23:3
focus 52:3	freeze 17:1	GALS 32:15 34:1,23 37:4 45:19 49:19, 24 50:20 52:5 53:6 54:21 55:4,8 56:24 65:1 66:12 68:11,20 69:1 71:11	gmail 26:9	grooming 39:2
folded 71:20	freezing 15:24 18:20	game 28:3	goal 22:3	grounds 5:13
foot 69:21	frequent 22:18	gap 28:8,12 57:6 66:2 70:18 71:23 72:2,3	goals 56:20	group 21:22 32:7
force 38:1 61:22 64:17 71:15	frequently 23:11	Garnhart 51:21,23,24 55:6,7	gold 7:14,16	groups 31:23
forced 39:11 62:9 65:23	friend 55:19 56:9	garnishment 19:16	good 3:9 11:5 21:21 26:16 31:9 37:15 40:10 43:7 44:16 49:6 50:4 51:23 57:16 61:17 65:12	guardian 32:7 34:21 35:21 36:5,24 39:20 41:20 42:3,7, 14 43:1,7,8, 11,18,22,24 52:4 66:11 68:8 70:11
forces 67:18	frontline 65:15	gave 3:23	government 40:22	guardians 31:24 32:4,9, 11,20,23 34:17 35:9, 14,17 36:8, 12,18 39:14 48:9 62:6 68:20
forcing 64:12 68:3	frozen 14:16, 19 15:6 16:4, 6 17:14 19:10 22:23 28:21	General 20:23	governor 71:3,22	guardianship 40:14 43:15
forensic 49:18,22 50:10,22 51:3	full 33:23 64:13 68:4	generations 51:8	governs 11:17,19	guess 25:9 44:8
forgotten 67:18	functioning 53:21 56:15		grade 45:5	guidance 3:22,23 30:12
form 27:1 42:11	functions 54:23		grandchild 65:21 68:15	guilty 6:8
forms 26:19	fundamental 52:7		grandchild's 67:7	
forward 54:5 56:19,21 59:7 72:7,8	funds 15:24 16:3,9,11 18:8 22:22 28:18		grandmother 65:13	
fought 6:11 39:21 65:20	future 36:1 39:17 61:9 65:6 71:7		grandson 69:10	
found 6:8 21:2 45:6	fuzzy 51:1		granted 25:24 46:7 59:6	
foundation 4:11 37:21 38:2 68:24				
fragmented 62:2				

H	30:13 47:8,20 55:16 58:2 59:2,8,9,14 60:16 71:13 72:19	27:10 honor 61:21 Honorable 31:6 37:17 honored 11:8 hope 72:10 hopeful 36:9 Hospital 50:13 Hotel 11:24 hour 45:21 hours 34:4 36:17,19,21 39:15 50:15 63:11,14,15 67:1 70:19 house 20:3 human 31:11 58:20 hurting 51:7,8 husband 6:1	5:1 6:17 7:1 12:2 14:6 17:9 23:5,18 24:20 26:2,3, 7 29:20 31:10,17 35:20 37:20 41:11 45:5 49:7,14 63:14 70:23 illustrates 47:2 imagine 9:9 immediately 6:5 14:12 15:2 17:1,5 18:3 26:4 28:11 68:3 imminent 50:14 immunity 54:23 impact 16:14 19:24 20:10 32:22 35:13 impacting 32:3 impacts 67:4 implemented 52:18 54:14 implementing 10:9 importance 8:6 57:19 important 7:11 32:1,2 36:14 53:14 57:20 58:11 59:11 60:1,23	72:21 importantly 7:1 32:22 imposed 40:17,19 imprisonment 40:21 improperly 47:1 improve 48:22 53:16 in-person 8:10 inability 28:17,18 inadvertently 33:2 inaudible 12:8 37:21 45:6 46:2 61:5 63:5 70:10 incapacity 43:4 incarceration 40:19 incarcerations 48:2 include 27:12 36:1 60:18 included 60:21 includes 26:18 50:16 including 15:22 inclusion
Hall's 61:23 halls 64:23 65:19 hand 65:20 handle 18:15 handles 17:18 happen 28:20 29:20 39:9 59:7 happened 5:5 40:15 44:4,8 58:22 59:5,7 60:22 64:3 happening 19:20 38:19 49:9 happy 36:14 44:9 hard 7:9 harm 38:16, 23 46:14,15 Harrison 9:16 hasten 57:17 head 46:1 health 37:23 53:7,12 56:15 healthier 53:22 heard 4:9,20 9:14 31:20 41:23 42:15 43:8,12 57:19 64:24 hearing 5:9	hearings 4:21 hears 58:2 hearsay 30:15 heart 49:16 Heartbreak 11:24 heartbreaking 69:10 heavily 34:21 held 23:19 66:16 69:8 helped 43:10 helpful 29:24 Heston 12:1 high 33:3 high-stake 6:18 7:2 higher 63:13 66:16 hindsight 46:7 hit 10:4 11:24 hold 12:24 64:5,18 66:12 holding 65:20 holds 62:12 home 16:19 53:4 55:23 67:23 69:12 honestly	I IDBA 45:15 identification 33:20 identified 33:12,17 40:24 47:21 identify 15:10 34:18 42:3 47:23 63:2 ignore 30:14 Illinois 3:3,11, 24 4:12,13		

27:8	information 8:8 32:5 35:7 42:2	interpreted 14:11	38:15 43:15	31:12 35:5
income 24:10 25:5,18	informed 34:19	interrupt 43:19	involvement 33:13	36:16 45:6
inconsistency 66:19	infrastructure 9:18	intervention 52:16 53:24	involves 33:4	47:23 50:2
incorporate 50:16	initially 47:13	interviewing 48:11	involving 5:10 33:15 53:7	62:5 69:11
increase 30:22	initiated 28:10	intimate 34:6	isolation 33:6 41:21	70:23 71:1,7
increased 13:12 24:22 29:10 35:3	initiating 17:5	63:11 67:2 70:13 71:9	issuance 22:21 60:10	judge's 64:2 67:16
increasing 36:10	injured 45:4	intimidation 33:5	issue 5:21 9:20 12:21 15:17 19:23 20:4 31:20 56:13,14 57:22 59:23 60:24	judgement 11:18 13:18 14:24 15:6 25:8,21 28:2 31:2
independence 48:14	injury 24:24	investigate 42:1,9,10 44:8	issued 12:23 15:6 22:19 58:24 60:20	judgements 30:3
independent 43:6 44:1 46:9 56:22	inside 43:20 62:20	investigated 44:4 55:14	issues 19:4 31:19 34:1 47:4 53:20 57:18 59:1,11	judges 3:23 17:18 31:22 32:2,4,10 34:21 35:2,6, 17 50:4,6 51:5 62:7 71:9
indicating 55:13	instability 43:3	investigating 40:16	item 3:5	judgment 13:1,5 14:9, 11 15:11,18 16:24 17:19 18:4,14,18,19 19:5 20:11 22:13,17 23:18 24:2,5, 9,11,14,15,16 25:3 28:5,11, 14 52:15
indication 45:24	instances 15:23 58:19	investigation 41:23 43:6 44:7 46:11 54:12 55:24 56:24	J	judgments 14:5
indirectly 34:24	insurance 28:19	investigative 42:8 48:14	jail 40:18	judicial 4:6 31:12 35:20, 22
individual 16:6 19:17 21:2 46:24	intend 17:20	investment 9:1	Jane 55:24	judiciary 11:14 34:20
individuals 13:19 15:14 21:13 30:8,23	intended 10:23 22:13	investments 8:16	Jennifer 31:6 37:17	July 56:4
inflicted 46:14	intensive 63:11 67:1	invisible 66:6	job 67:6	
informal 30:13	intent 19:1 29:6	invited 35:17	join 11:8	
informality 30:24 31:1	interdisciplina ry 53:19	invoicing 29:8	JP 20:8	
	interest 32:17 54:18 70:16	invoked 45:5	judge 6:9 12:17 16:8,22	
	Internet 29:13	involved 22:5		

justice 3:3 4:8 5:2,3,17 6:18 7:2 10:22 11:4,9 12:11 18:21 22:2,18 26:16 27:2,23 30:19 45:16	18:12 27:20, 22	12:8	list 62:5,17 63:5	55:8 64:23 69:7
juvenile 37:5	Lasalle 20:2	legislature 26:5 27:11	listen 41:7	LMS 35:23
K	lasting 43:13	legitimate 15:7	listened 50:18,19 51:10	local 10:18 29:7,8
key 32:19 35:9	law 11:6 15:19 16:9 20:1 21:10 41:11 42:14 45:1,13 62:21 69:3,22 70:23 71:3,22	lengthy 64:13 68:5	listening 31:20 50:1, 11,12 70:1	located 20:5 31:13
kids 40:3	lawmakers 72:1	letter 69:10	lists 64:18	location 9:13
kind 37:3 71:23	lawyers 5:7 53:6,10	level 10:22	litem 31:24 32:4,7,9,11, 20,24 34:17, 22 35:9,14, 17,21 36:5,8, 12,18 39:14, 20 41:20 42:3,7,14 43:1,7,8,12, 18,22,24 48:10 52:4 62:6 66:12 68:20 70:11	lofty 22:3
knew 17:3 18:4 62:1 66:8	lay 61:24	levied 13:9	literally 28:17	long 44:12 45:21
knowing 30:9	layer 62:4	levy 20:4	litigant 70:6	lost 43:17 66:10
knowledge 32:20 34:15 40:2 54:10	lead 23:1 48:1 67:22	liability 54:22	litigants 4:16 5:6,10 26:17, 23 27:3 32:13 50:24	lot 8:5 21:3 26:23 72:13
L	learned 38:18 67:9,21	liberty 40:23 44:2	litigated 24:14 29:19	Louisiana 20:5,6,11
labeled 46:8	learning 67:6	licensed 49:20	litigation 14:4 29:19 48:9 54:18 56:1,8	love 21:9 48:15
lack 5:22 8:7 10:8 32:19 46:18 62:16 63:23 67:23	leave 23:5	lien 13:8 15:20 16:13	live 7:13 20:22 35:24	low-income 21:24 22:17
laid 61:24	leaving 4:21	lieu 26:21	lives 10:20,21 16:14 38:10	lower 69:8
landscape 35:12	led 16:23	life 23:18 38:11 41:15 43:13 63:8 66:8 70:10,11		Lynn 40:8
language 38:24	legal 3:16,17 5:19,23 21:8, 23 31:23 32:18 34:6 35:12 36:2,6 37:18 41:7 53:14,19 56:14 62:8	life-altering 32:14		M
largest 3:16	legality 71:5	lifelong 65:17		made 6:4 8:17 16:23 18:7 25:22 35:23 43:12 60:11, 13
LARSEN 8:4 13:22 16:16	legislation 21:5,6	light 16:15 29:23 64:2		Madigan 20:24
	legislative	likeable 42:6		mail 19:17
		limit 29:5,10, 18 44:14		maintain 3:12
		lingo 37:18		maintaining 30:24 48:13
		Lisa 20:24		

maintains 62:5	Margalit 11:2 21:20,21,22 24:3,7,12,18 25:15,20 26:1 27:4,18	measurable 54:2,5	minimized 67:18	mistaking 19:22
majority 29:18	mass 64:13	mechanism 54:24	minimum 39:17 66:22	misunderstood 39:4
make 6:19,23 9:3 10:12 31:24 32:3 33:2 34:19,23 35:8 38:7 44:22 49:17 53:6,11 58:4, 11,12 65:5 68:15	match 12:15 56:12	medical 16:10 28:16,19 48:12 49:15	minor 33:6 43:7	misused 41:9
makes 27:12	material 40:24 58:21 61:1,5 64:8 67:24	meet 23:16 39:19	minute 30:9 47:17 55:6 61:16 69:15	mixing 50:5
making 22:4 32:2,5,14 50:7 62:16 71:23	materials 47:13	Meghan 51:21,24	minutes 44:14 45:22 61:15	model 53:18
managed 3:19	matter 45:13 46:7 58:23 59:4,14	members 22:6 37:16 40:11 51:24 57:17	misbehaving 29:9	modern 30:7
managing 3:15	matters 17:17,18 21:1 30:22,24 34:10,13 52:6 53:6 57:6 58:2	mental 45:17 46:15 53:7,12 56:15	misdemeanor 10:9,11	modernization 13:17 16:2
mandated 65:14 67:1 69:16	mentioned 5:18 7:15 8:17 9:6 14:1	mess 72:13	misinterpret 33:1	modernize 11:9,11
mandates 63:10 67:13	mature 39:10	method 61:10	mispronounced 44:12	modernized 11:20 12:13
mandating 63:24	McClean 19:6,7	Michael 11:5 29:3	misquoted 67:22	modernizing 16:15
mandatory 68:19,24 69:22	meaning 35:24 57:8	Mike 11:2	misrepresent 32:24	modest 72:4
manipulation 33:6	meaningful 4:5 5:2 44:2 48:10 56:22 68:20	million 29:15 49:11 55:2	missing 41:1	modifications 47:11
manner 34:16	meaningfully 71:17	mind 21:7 22:17	misstate 59:18	moment 71:6
mans 63:21	meaningless 17:12	mine 16:24 71:20	misstated 67:21	Monet 37:12, 22
March 56:3	means 3:13 6:22 29:18 70:24	minimal 66:14	mistake 57:24 59:16,21,22 60:5,11,13 61:1 64:8 67:21	money 14:17 16:7
		minimization 48:13	mistaken 43:3	month 7:22
		minimize 33:1	mistakes 58:21 67:24	months 46:3
				Morgan 20:8
				morning 3:9 11:5 21:21 31:9 37:15 40:10 44:16 49:6 51:23 57:16 61:17 65:12
				mortgage 16:10

mortgages 16:17 mother 38:14 39:23 43:9 61:18 motion 14:8 17:11 19:8 23:10 26:19 28:13,22 59:8 60:19 64:10 68:1,10 motions 28:4 movement 52:16 moving 72:7, 8 multiple 47:15 N naming 19:3 nature 7:11 13:7 22:2 NAVARRO 9:6 10:7,15, 24 36:17,22 navigating 36:8 necessarily 15:18 47:9 needed 62:3 69:14 negative 23:8 negotiation 18:18 neighbor 29:8	newer 9:17 nice 50:3 night 38:13 66:13 nine-part 35:15 Nodding 24:7 non-wage 13:3 18:2 19:16 notice 15:4 19:4,14,17, 18,20 23:8 24:21 26:19 42:15 43:17 48:3 60:10 noticing 43:16 notion 17:5 nuisance 66:5 number 3:24 4:2 11:24 12:14 13:23 27:8 31:19 35:4 numbers 47:23 numerous 19:13 nurses 69:18 O O'BRIEN 3:3 objecting 23:8 objection 23:13	objections 47:10 observed 43:12 53:2,3 obtain 6:12 43:10 obtained 5:24 8:8 obtains 24:14 occasions 60:22 occur 10:1 occurred 47:8,14 offer 47:1 offered 35:24 office 12:1 36:23 59:13 62:5 officer 66:17 71:6 officers 71:3, 4 official 41:12 63:24 67:14 offset 35:14 Oftentimes 7:8 42:12 ongoing 66:4 OP 5:9 opaque 62:2 open 6:3 64:17 operate 57:10 62:14 63:9	operating 66:14 opinion 60:9 opportunity 3:10 5:17 52:22 70:8 opposing 45:20 opposite 17:6 22:6 opposition 45:18 72:11 option 60:19 oral 58:10 order 3:13,20 4:14,16,20 5:18 6:1,3,6, 11,23 9:8,24 16:5,8 17:20 20:3,7,11 26:8 30:4 40:13 41:8, 10,14 44:22 45:7,10 47:3, 20,24 63:24 67:14 71:13, 24 ordered 59:13 orders 4:6 13:10 32:21 33:14 37:10 51:12 71:23 organization 15:9 orientation 35:5 outlandish 46:9	overlap 45:1 overlook 42:12 70:22 overlooked 39:4 overly 72:5 oversight 55:3,12 68:20 owed 42:16 P paid 49:11 pain 38:20 49:12 panel 58:24 parent 16:17 42:5,16 45:3 46:12,19,21 48:16 54:2 parent-child 53:8,23 parental 34:9, 12 39:23,24 parenting 34:10,13 35:1 38:17 39:21 42:5 52:10, 17,20 53:3 parents 33:4 part 37:3 53:13 participate 34:11 37:8 39:14 participation 30:18,23
---	---	--	--	---

parties 11:19, 21 12:20 13:4,13 15:4 19:14,23,24 43:17 48:3 58:10	pediatrician 50:23 51:1,2	24	policies 9:3 10:4	precedent 60:4,5
partner 11:6 34:7 63:12 67:2 70:13 71:10	pediatricians 49:23	personality 42:17	poor 16:23 62:8	precise 68:14
partnership 3:20	pending 17:11	personally 5:21 20:18 59:20	Porter 7:6 26:14 27:5,23 36:23	preference 7:10
party 12:24 17:20,21 18:3 19:5 20:22 25:11,23 29:21 41:24 60:11	people 7:8 16:13 32:8 44:3 50:23 51:4 66:12,24 68:6	persons 31:2	portion 47:20	preparation 54:16
passed 21:6 30:17	peoples' 16:17	persuasive 42:7	possess 34:14,17	prepare 69:3, 23
past 21:6 33:11,13 53:22 57:20 66:8	percent 4:12 8:17 33:16 54:15	petition 45:12 59:23 60:6,12	post 11:18	presence 3:2
path 35:23 54:5 56:18,21	perfect 50:3	petitions 9:10	post- separation 41:21 67:4	present 13:13 37:19 61:16 71:12
pathologists 50:10	perform 49:16 52:8 57:3	phonetic 38:2 45:14,15 55:19,20	postjudgment 16:1 17:19 22:10	presented 51:17 58:4 61:23
patron 29:8	performing 53:13	physical 38:8 42:11	posttrial 14:8, 15,23 15:8,11 16:21 17:3,8, 11 19:8 28:4, 13,22	preserve 41:17 44:8 47:9,24
patterns 33:4 66:7	permitted 17:7	place 8:21 17:6 20:19 40:3 44:1 52:12 53:14 54:14	potential 4:3 14:3 15:11	preserved 41:3 47:21 67:17
pay 4:9 5:8 16:17,19 23:3 28:18,19 62:9	perpetrator 50:8 51:11, 13,14,15	plaintiff 17:1	potentially 24:5 25:12	preserves 40:15 44:6
payment 23:4	persistence 42:18	plaintiff's 14:5	pounds 45:3	pressure 42:23
payments 55:2	person 20:20 25:13 40:22 42:1,6,16,22 70:9,12	plaintiffs 11:17	poverty 5:6	pretty 24:20 25:2,7
peace 39:2	person's 40:23	platforms 8:23	power 49:19 62:8 66:13	preventing 36:12 42:24
	personal 12:16 13:6 16:2 22:12, 15,20 24:23,	podium 3:8	powerful 5:19 42:7	previous 17:24 33:19
		point 16:7 23:20 25:9,22 59:10,11	practice 12:17 20:14 28:16,17 30:7	prima 45:7
		points 27:24	practicing 20:1	principal 69:18
		police 38:9 46:2 50:13 71:3		prior 34:4

prioritize 63:5	15:16 18:18	40:11,12	51:12 62:3	punished
prioritizes	21:22 23:7	41:19 44:6,18	71:24	46:22
65:3	26:11 30:21	46:20 47:7	protective	purge 40:22
private 55:5,	35:20 48:22	48:6,21 51:22	3:12 4:6,14,	purpose
10 62:22	52:15 54:9	52:1,4 57:2,	16,20 5:18	23:16 54:5
Privately	68:2	15 70:18	6:23 9:24	56:20
42:23	processes	71:18 72:4	40:13 41:8,10	pursuant 8:23
privilege	22:4	proposals	42:22 44:22	pursue 5:15
30:15	produced	40:9 44:21	45:2 46:11	14:15 15:8
problem	3:21	46:20 48:22	47:3,20 63:24	16:20 18:17
10:17,19 19:9	profession	57:20 70:4,10	65:14	26:3 31:3
47:2 54:21	57:7	72:15,21	protects	pursued
procedural	professional	proposed	61:20	46:16 56:1
53:20 54:19	34:16 40:16	6:15,21 19:2	provide 11:21	pursuing
procedure	52:9 53:17	22:7,11 23:7	18:23 22:11	17:3,8 19:8
14:7 17:10	57:1 68:13	34:2 35:18	42:2 62:2	29:7
18:1	professionals	63:1 64:10	provided 35:7	push 51:5
procedures	46:17 53:13,	67:13 68:1	provider 3:16	put 41:14
10:4	21 54:10	prosecuted	providing	51:10,15
proceeding	56:13 63:9	5:20	12:15 21:23	
4:18 6:5 41:4	programs	protect 15:12	26:20 36:5	Q
67:14 71:20	32:18 69:19	22:13 25:3,4	68:22	qualifications
proceedings	project 3:20,	38:23 42:16	psychiatrists	34:8
3:13 4:2,14	21 5:9 7:23	68:17	49:23 50:22	qualified
6:24 9:7,9,11,	promise 6:19	protected	psychological	53:12,20
13,19,24	promotes 4:5	25:7 46:19	50:14	56:16
10:5,11 11:22	prompt 48:3	51:14 64:24	psychologist	qualifies 34:5
12:3 13:11	promulgated	67:14	49:18 50:1	question 6:16
14:10 15:22	12:3 29:5	protecting	51:3	7:6 8:1,15
17:10 18:14	34:10	15:14	psychologists	10:6 26:14
23:21 38:17	property	protection	49:22 50:22	27:15,23
40:17 43:16	12:16 16:2	3:20 6:1,11	psychology	41:16 52:3,7
44:22 45:1	22:13,15,21	15:23 29:14	49:17 66:6	53:5 54:11
47:3,14,15	24:23	32:21 33:14	public 36:23	56:13
64:1 72:23	proposal 3:6,	37:5,10 45:8,	56:1,3 62:18	questions 7:4
proceeds	10 4:11 6:14	10 46:22	66:1 69:21	8:3 13:21,22
24:24	15:1,20 31:8,	47:12 53:24	72:19	21:17 23:22
process 4:24	16 33:23	54:22 65:4	pulled 32:8	26:13 31:4,5
11:12 12:13	37:13 38:5	71:13 72:2		
		protections		
		21:7 45:15		

36:15 42:18 44:9 49:2 51:18,20 57:13 61:13 65:9 72:18 quote 12:5	reasons 4:5 7:15 13:24 47:11,24 48:20 reassess 42:21 reassessed 42:20 reassessment 54:5,11 56:18 recanting 39:3 receive 24:8 48:3,10 50:4 54:21 received 45:22 55:13 56:2 59:2 receiving 35:10 recent 4:1 7:21 recently 24:21 58:22, 23 61:21 reciprocal 27:15 recognize 8:5 43:2 57:20 recognized 20:8 recognizes 20:7 23:12 28:7 52:5 recognizing 48:12 recommend 6:20 53:4	71:8 recommendati on 70:22 recommendati ons 32:1,15 33:2 34:19, 22,24 53:7,12 54:7 58:5 67:15 69:6 recommended 33:22 60:16 reconstructed 48:4 record 3:1,12 4:13,17,23 5:4,5,22 6:18, 22 8:6,7 10:4 35:8 40:19 41:7,12,14, 16,17,18 44:6 46:17 47:13, 22 48:4 58:9, 22 59:18 62:18 63:20, 23,24 67:12, 15,17 68:1 71:16,17,19 record- keeping 72:3 recorded 4:18 7:9 9:11,19 36:1 47:21 recording 3:14 6:4,9,23 7:7,20 8:1,2, 23 9:18,23 10:3,10 48:2 56:1 recordings 48:1	records 42:15 46:6 48:12 55:1 65:2 68:13 recreation 69:19 recurring 31:20 red 63:16 referred 58:3 reflect 3:1 30:7 Reform 20:24 reforms 46:20 64:16 regain 43:9 regard 46:13 regime 24:20 26:6 registered 20:6 regular 17:17 20:15 rehearing 60:7 reissue 12:21 related 33:24 36:4 47:22 relates 7:6 relating 31:19 relation 9:21 65:19 66:11 70:6 relations 32:10 33:10 34:1	relationship 54:3 relationships 44:3 53:9,23 relax 30:14 release 18:8 56:3 reliable 4:17 5:4 6:19 44:23 relief 14:15,23 15:8,11 16:21 17:3,9 25:23 28:4 rely 34:21 35:6,7 55:9, 10 remain 4:21 7:16 15:20 48:4 53:9 remained 12:7 remarkably 12:7 remedies 45:15 remedy 17:21 57:23 remember 19:11 remote 8:11 13:10 remove 52:13 rent 16:10 23:3 rep 63:7 repair 16:19
R				
race 42:6 raise 14:21 56:24 68:11 70:21 raised 27:23 71:14 raises 52:6 rare 23:14 reached 54:13 reaching 45:11 read 19:13 49:10 reading 58:21 ready 13:21 31:4 real 6:19 12:16 14:20 15:7 27:22 28:14 72:2 reality 7:17 46:10 62:1 64:22 reason 12:11 42:24 reasonable 6:9 7:20 39:16				

repeat 38:24	representing 11:3,7 41:24 68:21	respectfully 28:2 44:17 48:20 61:8	resulting 47:23	Rockford 31:14
repeated 52:12,18			retaliation 45:9	Rogers 3:1 8:3 11:1 21:14,20 23:24 24:4,8, 13 25:9,16,21 26:12 27:21 29:1 31:5 36:16 37:11, 15 40:7,10 44:10,19 47:17 51:23 57:13,16 65:8
repeatedly 54:10 61:2	represents 41:3	respondent 5:21 10:21 58:6 59:1	retaliatory 48:9	
report 38:9 44:2 50:13 57:24 58:14, 21,24 59:5, 15,17,23 60:3,5,11,21 61:3,23 63:3, 19 64:6,7,17	request 52:22	respondents 4:22	retired 65:13	
reported 46:4 55:23 59:5	requests 52:13,18	response 55:13 58:15 63:12	Retrinda 70:3, 5	
reporter 4:10, 15 5:8,15 6:4 7:14,19 63:21 65:15 69:16 71:12	require 3:11 4:24 40:16 56:16,18 71:5,7,10	responses 43:2 63:2	return 30:2,6	
reporters 4:1 7:17 10:8	required 22:15 36:18 43:17 58:3 63:15 66:3 68:23 70:13	responsibilities 34:9,13 39:11	returned 54:20	
reporting 4:15 8:10	requirement 23:9 35:18	responsibility 39:1	reunited 56:8	role 32:12 36:8 52:8 70:14
reports 47:15 58:13 63:12	requirements 19:14 30:13 33:24 34:3 35:13	responsible 39:17 55:11 62:19	review 4:6 5:2 41:2 44:2 57:21,24 58:7,8 59:17, 18,20 60:5,17 61:3 64:7	room 39:6 46:1 51:4 68:6
represent 11:15,16 31:15 32:16 37:20 38:2 41:24	requires 41:11 57:4	restitution 60:17,18,21	reviewable 4:23 7:1 44:23	rooms 23:18
representative 66:12,23	requiring 6:22 26:21 34:4 70:19 71:3,18	restored 43:18	reviewed 5:10	routine 6:2
representative s 62:6 65:2 68:12 69:1	reside 20:20	restriction 54:3,11	reviewing 41:17	routinely 4:13
represented 3:18	resolution 17:11	restrictions 42:19 52:10 53:9,23 54:13 55:16 56:19	revolution 29:13	rude 21:16
	resolved 18:9	restrictive 52:17	rights 11:17, 19 12:19 13:17,20 15:12,14 21:12 31:3	rule 3:11 4:4 6:15,21 8:24 10:10,13,22 11:10,17,23 12:3,5,7,18 13:1,17 15:15,16,17 16:12,15 17:24 18:23 19:11,12 20:7,17 22:8, 9,11 23:7,12, 15,22 26:18 27:6,13 29:4, 5,6,24 31:17 34:3,7,14 35:19 36:14
	resources 5:7 7:3	result 4:20 5:14	rigorous 66:4	
	respect 25:10 44:14		rise 57:18	
	respectful 21:14,17		risk 33:2 72:2	
			risks 34:19	

40:5 60:23 61:2,6,9 63:4, 18 64:4,6 66:21 67:8, 13,20 rules 10:18 11:10,16 22:7,24 28:7, 24 30:14 37:16 57:9 60:7 62:22 64:14 68:7 70:12 ruling 16:23 23:1,9 48:1 64:2 rulings 47:10 run 17:1 19:7 56:10 72:10 run-off 45:19 running 18:19 runs 14:11 45:23 rural 8:11 Rush 50:12 S safe 65:21 69:7 safeguard 68:2 safeguards 9:3 46:21 56:12 safety 35:1 39:18 41:8 42:24 45:6,12 46:8 47:4	52:24 53:22 65:4 67:7,11 Safocal 55:19 56:4 sake 61:11 65:5 sale 12:16 sample 33:8, 19 sanction 58:18 sanctions 27:7 48:2 58:5 Sarah 61:14, 17 sat 67:10 scenario 22:18 school 66:1 69:8,17,18 Schools 69:22 scored 11:24 scrambling 17:12 screen 33:9 section 12:8 19:12 26:18 27:7 45:22 securing 22:14 Security 25:6 seek 13:18 14:23 57:23 seeking 42:18	46:21 60:8,9 seeks 55:11 selection 55:21 self- represented 26:17,23 27:2 29:22 30:23 70:6 send 15:3 sense 27:13 64:11 68:2 71:2 sensitive 44:13 sentence 40:18 series 10:18 35:15 serve 20:5,6,9 37:4 served 5:21 6:2,10 13:14 20:18 58:7 72:1 service 13:3 65:14 67:20 services 3:17 21:23 54:1 serving 14:12 19:18 43:23 61:21 sessions 31:21 setting 66:22 setup 8:18,19 sexually 51:9	55:22 56:5 share 49:10 65:22 shared 49:14 shares 20:19 shelter 22:14 shield 64:4 show 6:14 20:17 30:9,10 40:20,24 44:4 47:8 55:1 showing 68:22 shutdown 28:17 side 45:9 sides 22:6 28:1 sign 66:10 signed 71:3, 22 significant 3:21,22 significantly 23:12 signs 69:5 silence 38:20 43:4 similar 71:23 simple 41:6 67:23 simply 33:3 39:7 43:20 56:17 62:22 sir 44:19 47:17 49:1	situation 50:9 51:11 situations 42:21 43:14 skills 34:17 slammed 38:14 sleeps 66:13 small 11:20 25:7 29:5,7, 10,19 30:17, 22 33:8,19 59:10 smaller 28:15 snowball 23:1 social 25:5 69:18 solve 10:17 54:20 son 14:18 45:3 46:3 sort 17:4 sorts 29:20 sought 43:9 59:20 sounds 38:24 source 41:5,6 47:24 sparse 24:20 25:2 Spartan 25:2 speak 3:7,10 29:3 31:7 44:19 70:8 speaker 70:3
---	---	---	---	---

speakers 21:15,18 44:14,15	72:22	26:2,3 28:9	strong 40:5	summons 30:6
speaking 27:6 31:22 37:13 40:8 49:5 51:21 57:14 61:14 65:10 70:4	standard 7:14,16 64:19 66:2,16 69:8	statutes 41:13	stronger 54:23,24	superficial 66:15
special 22:1 62:18 69:4	standardized 26:19 27:1 30:21	statutory 13:2 27:9 28:8 30:16 47:10	strongly 6:20 40:5	supervise 12:19
specialized 32:23 34:16 63:11 66:17 67:1	standardizing 15:15	stay 15:21 17:18 18:6,14 65:23 71:24	study 8:8,12	supervised 52:10
specializes 11:7	standards 57:1,5,8 63:13	stayed 40:19 60:13	subject 11:22 14:19 19:14	supervision 12:17 52:21 53:2 54:15
specific 23:20	start 3:5 10:10 14:12 45:23	staying 17:10	submit 59:3	supervisor 52:20,24
specifically 35:16 37:9	started 20:1 43:16	stays 14:9	submitted 6:15 55:12	supplementar y 12:3
spent 46:3 61:19 65:15, 18	Starzec 11:3, 5,6 15:13 17:16 19:11 21:16,19 23:23 29:2,3	stenographer 7:7	Subsection 26:18 27:7	support 3:10 6:14,16 38:5 40:5,11 41:19 48:6 49:13 52:1 54:2 58:17 59:18
spoke 37:17 72:20	state 6:6 7:18 8:10 9:2 10:15 20:9 30:21 31:21 32:8 35:2,12 37:1 43:8 63:14	step 43:24 69:21	substance 12:6	supports 42:19
spoken 14:1,2 67:19	state's 27:11	step-down 52:15 54:14 56:21	substantial 12:10 54:22	supposed 14:22 19:6
spot 63:16	stated 47:16	steps 54:2	substitute 13:6 43:6 53:17 69:17	Supreme 3:3, 11 5:2 7:22, 24 8:14,21 11:3 12:2 15:14 22:9 26:15 27:13 29:4,10 31:7, 10,16,18 32:6 35:20 36:4 58:12,13,15, 16 60:2,7,12
squalling 29:8	statement 39:8 48:16	stop 66:22	suburban 10:1	surface 42:13 66:8
stability 35:2	stating 49:18 50:15	stories 39:3	successful 43:11	surgery 49:16
stake 44:3	status 6:2 55:11	story 38:22	successfully 24:14	
stakeholders 32:19	statute 7:12	Street 20:2	sudden 54:16	
stalking 9:8		strength 33:23	suddenly 38:22	
stand 13:21 31:4 61:18		strengthen 54:2	sue 21:9	
		strengthens 44:7	suggested 45:18	
		stripped 45:14	suggests 23:7	

surprise 19:21	talk 7:8	67:16 71:15	20,22 54:19	33:24 34:3,
survivor 10:20 33:5 61:19 63:8 64:23 65:22 67:5	talking 9:9 24:19 25:11 37:8	tethered 65:23	56:10 59:21 60:12 67:5 68:23 69:21 72:10,16	16,22 35:5,6, 10 37:2,3,6 39:15 41:20, 22 43:22 46:18 48:10 50:15 52:5,6 53:5,16 54:20 56:12,17 57:5,6,7 63:11 66:4, 15,17 67:2 68:19,22 70:13,19,24 71:9
survivor's 4:7,9 64:2	task 38:1 61:22 64:17 71:15	theoretical 5:23	timeframe 14:13	trainings 31:21 49:14, 21 50:3,4 68:24 69:2,21
survivors 3:18 4:21 5:14,16 32:18 62:1,3,20 63:19 64:4	taught 35:4 57:3 66:10	therapeuticall y 53:10	timely 14:8,24 24:9	trains 71:1
survivors' 67:16	Taylor 49:4,7	therapist 52:23	times 22:16	transactions 28:1
suspension 60:17	teacher 49:8, 15 69:17	therapy 69:14	today 12:4 23:2 29:16 31:10,15 38:5 39:19 61:18 65:12 72:7, 12,20	transcribed 4:2
system 3:14 4:16 5:14 7:20 28:3 33:21 35:24 44:4 49:9,23 50:3,6,16,21 51:7,16 53:16 54:1 57:10 58:2 61:20 62:2,20 64:9 65:17,24 67:18 68:8,9, 14,17 70:15	teacher's 69:17	thing 39:24	told 49:24 55:3,4 59:22	transcript 5:12 6:8 41:2, 3,5
systematic 63:2	team 49:21	things 26:15 42:12 72:15	Tonovich 55:19	transfer 14:17
systemic 46:16 47:2	technical 64:15 68:7	third-party 19:3,15,19 20:14	tool 5:19 41:8	transferred 12:23
T	technology 8:16 9:2,4,23	thought 72:11	tools 32:16	transform 57:7
taking 26:17 70:14	temporary 52:14,15 54:3 56:19	thousand 28:15	top 22:16	transparency 4:5 62:16 64:7
	Ten 12:2	threatened 14:18	topic 36:6,10 44:13	transparent 6:24
	tenure 31:17	threats 33:7 67:12	total 62:15	trapped 62:20
	term 24:18	time 5:9 12:10 15:3 16:4,5, 14 17:17 18:11 21:15 23:8,17,19,20 28:11,12 29:11 30:5 34:10,13 35:1 38:17 39:21 42:20,21 48:16 52:17,	trafficking 31:11	trauma 32:14
	terminating 47:12		train 53:10	
	terms 5:19 18:13 39:2 49:13		trained 35:3 42:3,9,14 43:2 65:2 66:7 68:12 71:4	
	testified 52:20,23 53:1		training 32:16,23	
	testimony 6:7 47:9 64:3			

39:2 41:21 43:2 46:13 48:8 53:7 56:14 64:12 66:6 68:4 69:4,24 treated 19:15 48:18 treatment 28:20 53:21 trial 3:23 5:5 6:7 30:6,11 59:14 trials 17:18 triggers 40:21 54:11 troubled 66:2 troubling 5:11 28:22 62:4 true 41:24 68:8 trust 52:4 Trustees 35:22 truth 39:10 64:11 65:1 66:9 68:3 tuition 16:18 turn 22:8 turnover 36:12 turns 40:15 two-tiered 5:14 type 23:13 24:17 25:24	typically 23:3 U ultimate 25:13 ultimately 58:12,16 60:3 unable 25:18 unacceptable 68:1 unaware 52:24 unchanged 12:7 undergo 66:4 undergone 12:9 underlying 56:23 understand 21:4 24:1 25:10 35:11 39:23 64:15 66:5 67:3 69:4,23 understanding 34:18 36:11 63:9 70:17 understands 38:7 64:22 understood 72:1 undertaken 15:10 undue 72:5 uniformity 22:12	unique 11:13 unmistakable 45:24 unnecessary 72:14 unrecorded 4:21 unreliable 46:17 unremarkable 46:6 unrepresente d 5:10 13:13, 19 21:13 30:8 31:2 unsafe 42:5 43:9 67:23 untrained 63:17 untrust 46:17 urge 6:20 68:23 urgency 57:11 72:4 useless 6:12 utilities 23:4 utterances 46:2 V vacate 60:8 valid 17:4 values 68:14 vast 29:18 vehicle 26:7	vendors 69:19 venue 12:22 verbatim 5:4 63:23 71:16 verifiable 48:10 verified 50:10 versus 7:7 victim 32:24 33:1 48:13 50:8 51:13 victims 39:13 vigilant 68:12 vile 66:20 violated 6:5 violating 5:19 violation 5:20 violations 21:10 violence 3:19, 24 7:23 8:14 9:7,15 31:8, 11,19 32:18, 21,22 33:3, 11,14,15,18, 20,24 34:7, 18,20,23 35:3,16 36:3, 9 37:10 38:1, 8 39:13,14,15 45:5,12 46:18 50:5 61:19,22 63:10 65:22 66:15 67:3 71:5,15,19 visibly 45:4	visit 55:23 visitation 34:9,13 visited 53:4 visually 39:10 vital 64:10 volunteers 69:20 vulnerable 44:3 W wage 13:2 18:1 wait 23:10 waiting 24:5 waived 30:17 walking 64:23 65:18 wall 38:14 wanted 69:11 ward 37:13 43:8 warning 61:16 warrant 72:12 watched 56:9 watching 39:6 ways 10:19 12:14 15:13 weapon 63:23 Weaponizing 45:11 weeks 71:2
---	--	---	---	---

weigh 70:16	worker 33:22	9:23 10:10	
welfare 22:15 37:23 48:12 65:16 68:13	workers 69:18		
West 9:16	working 32:9		
whatsoever 15:21	works 65:17 70:18		
wild 24:22	world 14:20		
willingness 18:13	writing 38:12 41:12		
Wilson 37:12, 15,22	written 6:13, 14 13:5 23:9 26:21,24 27:1 52:2		
window 17:8 28:21	wrong 54:7		
Winnebago 31:13 33:9,17 55:1	wrote 69:10		
wins 27:16,17	Y		
wired-up 10:2	year 11:23 54:4 56:5 69:3 71:14		
wishes 43:9	years 3:18 4:1 6:1,11 14:5 24:5,14 25:12 33:11,16 34:4 38:4,12 39:20 43:18 49:8 52:12,21 54:15,19 58:8,9 60:15 61:19 65:18 66:3 67:20 68:16 72:9		
withdraws 39:8	you-all 70:20 72:15		
witnessing 65:16	Z		
Women 61:22 71:16	Zoom 8:20,23		
wondering 10:12			
word 67:19			
words 38:19 63:17			
work 25:19 32:7 38:3,17 42:8 53:14 57:3,4			
worked 31:18			