



WASHINGTON COUNTY
CIRCUIT COURT
Dolores A. Bomrad, J.D.
Judicial Court Commissioner

Justice Center
484 Rolfs Avenue, Room 3244
West Bend, WI 53090
Office (262) 335-6820
Fax (262) 335-4776

September 10, 2019

Clerk of the Supreme Court
Attention: Deputy Clerk-Rules
P.O. Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701-1688

Dear Deputy Clerk and Honorable Justices:

Please consider this letter in support of the proposed amendment to SCR 35.015(intro) and 35.015(1) which would require minimum education and training for guardians ad litem on the dynamics and impact of family violence.

As someone who has been a family court judicial officer for over twenty eight years, and has presided over and decided many, many domestic abuse injunction and child placement and custody cases, I believe that it is crucially important that guardians ad litem in family court child custody and placement cases be well-educated. They must be able to identify domestic abuse, define the nature and context of the abuse, evaluate the implications of the abuse, and take informed action in the best interests of the children. Not all domestic abuse is the same. Guardians ad litem can do more harm than good if they do not know the nuances of domestic abuse and the effects of domestic abuse on children.

There are three outstanding publications that would be useful for training:

- The *Domestic Abuse Guidebook for Wisconsin Guardians Ad Litem*, created by the Governors Council on Domestic Abuse and End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, March 2017, <https://www.wicourts.gov/publications/guides/docs/galguidebook.pdf>,
- The *Practice Guides for Family Court Decision-Making in Domestic Abuse-Related Child Custody Matters* by Gabrielle Davis, Loretta Frederick, and Nancy Ver Steegh, 2015 Battered Women's Justice Project, <https://www.bwjp.org/resource-center/resource-results/practice-guides-for-family-court-decision-making-in-domestic-abuse-related-child-custody-matters.html>, and
- The *Guidelines for Examining Intimate Partner Violence*, Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, 2016, <https://www.afccnet.org/Portals/0/Center%20for%20Excellance/Guidelines%20for%20Examining%20Intimate%20Partner%20Violence.pdf>.

Thank you for your consideration, and for the opportunity to comment in support of the proposed Rule amendment.

Respectfully,



Dolores A. Bomrad

C: Sen. Roger Roth
Rep. Rob Brooks