

Dear Justices of the Wisconsin Supreme Court:

**RE: Rule Petition 19-01**

As an Official Wisconsin Court Reporter with 34 years experience, I would like to share some concerns related to proposed Petition 19-01.

I understand the need for a blended system of making the record as the pool of stenographic/voice – what I'll label “traditional” -- reporters continues to shrink. But the blending should be done in a way that will not jeopardize the integrity of the record. **Stenographic or voice writers should be the primary, preferred means of making the court record, and monitored DAR should be used as a backup method when a traditional reporter is not available** . There is no recording device that can surpass the ability of the human brain to accurately capture the record in real time.

At times reporters need to be reassigned temporarily to different courts. **Reassignment should be used judiciously.** Court reporting is a very difficult, strenuous profession. It requires intense concentration and continuous physical movement in a confined setting. Excessive time in court, with constant writing, will hasten reporter burnout and increase the likelihood of repetitive stress injury. It also reduces time available for transcription, resulting in transcript backlog and delay of proceedings.

**Traditional reporters should not be forced to transcribe DAR proceedings from other courts.** Transcription of DAR proceedings is a cumbersome and labor-intensive process. A traditional reporter first has to rewrite the job in steno or voice, attempting to identify unknown, unseen speakers and deal with issues of inaudible portions, simultaneous talking, and extraneous noises. A tape may have to be stopped and backed up several times in order to discern difficult passages. Once the job is rewritten, a transcript is produced. Transcript production from taped proceedings is a much longer and more difficult process than transcript production from steno notes, and could result in widespread transcript backlog. **Transcription of DAR proceedings by non-DAR reporters should be strictly voluntary, not mandatory.**

Court personnel work as a team. Judges choose their reporters and build a rapport with their staff. Reporters become accustomed to their judge's speaking style, habits, practices, and routine. Reporters and judges depend upon each other in making the record. My job-share partner and I provide real time translation to our judge, and he relies upon it as an aid in jotting down notes, checking testimony, and making rulings. Unforeseen circumstances may necessitate reporter reassignment, but judges should have some say in the process. **Judges should retain reasonable input into the reassignment of the reporter(s) they have chosen for their court.**

Finally, in order to attract and retain steno/voice reporters, **salary and page rates should be reviewed, compared to rates in other states, and adjusted accordingly.** Traditional reporters are a valuable resource to the State of Wisconsin. The pay scale and working conditions should reflect that value.

I fear that Petition 19-10, if approved as written, will jeopardize the integrity of the record. It will negatively impact traditional reporters, such that they may resign prematurely, which will hasten the demise of traditional court reporting practices in the state, to the detriment of the Wisconsin Court System.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Respectfully,

Janet Schulz  
Branch I Court Reporter  
Walworth County, WI