



To:

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you in support of the Official Court Reporters of King County who are facing the loss of their jobs due to the current economic crisis.

- *If Court Reporters are removed, who will protect the record?*

Court administrators are now attempting to cut costs by replacing live reporters with electronic recording systems. Questions remain about who will operate the equipment, but no one will be dedicated to maintaining the record. Machines are incapable of intelligent judgment and need constant monitoring, they may record confidential conversations, and entire sessions have already been lost when they were not operating properly. Also, readbacks will become a thing of the past. Audio installation costs are high, plus the cost of upgrades and replacement.

- *An audio record is not acceptable to the Appellate Courts.*

Real-time, instant transcription into a written record is impossible without a live reporter. Audio requires someone to type up the recordings later. The audio can even be sent overseas to be transcribed, raising serious security risks and obvious quality control problems. The insertion of "(inaudible)" is put into audio transcripts to cover words, sentences, paragraphs, or entire sessions where the noises cannot be discerned accurately. No one knows how much was lost. Since the audio record of court proceedings is inadequate for appellate review, transcriptionists must be hired to create written transcripts. They are not certified by the State of Washington as court reporters must be, and only need to be able to type. There is no exam to become a transcriptionist.

- *The use of live stenographic reporters is superior to electronic or digital audio in every way.*

Court Reporters are nicknamed "The Guardians of the Record." Live reporters can interrupt proceedings when there are multiple

voices speaking simultaneously, their experience helps with foreign accents and technical terminology, and live reporters use real-time technology to provide instant access to the judge and parties, and in this way the hearing-impaired are also beneficiaries of such access.

- *Live Reporters are accurate and integral to the preservation of our American system of justice.*

We must preserve our justice system even though other worthy interests compete for revenues. The erosion of confidence in such a basic institution is a risk we cannot afford to take, and I urge you to contact the administrators at King County and encourage them to find different ways to properly fund this basic part of government.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter,
Roger Flygare, President, WCRA