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May 26, 2017

Hon. Edward Pesik
Office of Administrative Hearings
P.O. Box 42488
Olympia WA 98504-2488

Sent via email to Ed.pesik@oah.wa.gov

Re: Comments to Proposed Rule Making WSR 17-09-084

Dear Judge Pesik,

The State Supreme Court's Access to Justice Board (ATJ Board) is charged with the responsibility to achieve equal access to the civil justice system, including access for those facing disparate access barriers. The duties of the ATJ Board and its Justice without Barriers Committee are to constructively examine, evaluate, advise and advocate on concerns and issues regarding access to justice in judicial and administrative proceedings. WAC 10-08-055 proposed by the Office of Administrative Hearing (OAH) furthers the fundamental principle that the judicial administrative system be accessible to all persons, by providing for the appointment of a suitable representative for litigants as an appropriate accommodation of a disability.

Representational Accommodation is essential to provide access to the administrative justice system and make OAH hearings accessible and meaningful to appellants with disabilities. The ATJ Board applauds the proposed WAC 10-08-055. The rule ensures that parties receive appropriate accommodations in order to meaningfully participate in the adjudicative proceedings with OAH, consistent with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD).

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Revelle, Chair
Access to Justice Board

cc: Paula Littlewood, Executive Director, Washington State Bar Association