

March 18, 2019

Wisconsin Supreme Court
P.O. Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701-1688

RE: Rule Petition 19-01 relating to making the record

Dear Honorable Justices of the Supreme Court:

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring an accurate record in Wisconsin courtrooms. I have been a court reporter for over nine years and currently work in Dane County as an official reporter. I write to convey my personal experiences in the courtroom that I believe are relevant as you consider making digital audio recording (“DAR”) an official means of taking the verbatim record in Petition 19-01.

I currently provide realtime transcription for my judge whenever requested, but especially during trials and important motion hearings. There have been multiple times when there may be an objection made during an examination of a witness, and my judge is able to review the question and/or answer and then is able to confidently make his ruling.

The judge I began my court reporting career with truly loved my realtime transcription. I wrote realtime for her whenever we were on the record. I was the first reporter who provided this service for her court. She said that she became so reliant on having the screen with the running transcript, that when she would be out at social gatherings and she did not hear or understand what somebody said to her, she would subconsciously look over to her right, expecting a screen to provide the words she had missed.

There is no dictation or audio machine that can provide the job I offer the court. If someone is coughing or papers are shuffled or attorneys or laypeople talk over one another, I am able to ask for clarification or command decorum in the courtroom to maintain a clear record. A machine will not be able to do that. The DAR transcriptions will never be as accurate as a stenographer’s transcription.

I appreciate your consideration of my experiences in court when considering Petition 19-01. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Colleen Clark
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