



720 w fifth street
appleton, wisconsin 54914
(920)832-1667
fax: (920) 832-1622

calumet county outreach

(920)849-7819

800-970-1171

Fax: 920-849-2988

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

From: Wendy Gehl
Legal Advocate/Staff Supervisor
Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs

Re: Petition 13-14 to Amend SCR 60.04.

Dear Wisconsin Supreme Court Justices,

I am writing to you today to ask for your support of Petition 13-14 to Amend SCR 60.04 that will positively impact pro se litigants in Wisconsin especially those who have been victimized by domestic violence.

I have had the privilege to work at Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs in Outagamie County for the last 29 years. In my advocacy, I have supported hundreds of victims at a variety of court hearings including many who have petitioned for protective orders for themselves or for their children.

The vast majority of my clients over the years have not had the luxury (the financial means) to obtain counsel to represent them and their interests. Victims of domestic abuse make so many courageous decisions. Often times this includes choosing legal remedies that will enhance their safety and be part of their overall safety plan. In doing so, they know full well that they must face their abuser head on and do the best that they can to represent themselves in a system that is not known to be user friendly.

Victims of domestic violence typically have been controlled and beaten down in many ways – physically, verbally, emotionally, and spiritually. Their experiences may vary, but they all share a common thread – experiencing trauma. How they survive it, cope with it, and articulate it will vary as well.

As the number of people entering the judicial system without counsel has increased significantly over the last few years, I personally have noticed that the courts in Outagamie

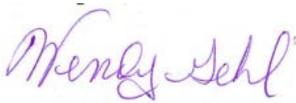
haven. help. hope.

County have tried to become more patient with pro se litigants. I believe that this speaks to the fantastic individuals that we have in our court system.

Petition 13-14 to Amend SCR 60.04 will assist the courts in ensuring that pro se litigants including victims of violence have reasonable accommodations so that all of the facts and evidence will be received and considered before a decision is made.

Thank you for your ongoing service to the citizens of Wisconsin and for your consideration of this important rule change.

Best Regards,



Wendy Gehl
Legal Advocate/Staff Supervisor
Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs
720 W. 5th Street
Appleton, WI 54914
(920) 955-9124

