

## Michelle J. Cook

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**Cc:** Stacy Youngquist  
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Good Morning:

I wanted to make a suggestion for an amendment to the Local Rules. I have noted in quite a few cases, and heard complaints from multiple family law attorneys, that Guardian Ad Litem feel free to drop a lengthy declaration on the parties just a day or two prior to the hearing. Granted, the court commonly grants continuances to give a party an opportunity to respond, however that increases the cost of litigation to the parties (including the cost of GAL fees). Furthermore, I have seen GAL's then reply to the parties' responses to their declaration. There should be some kind of regulation of this.

There also needs to be tighter controls over how GALs are charging their fees. I am seeing multiple Snohomish County attorney GALs have their business managers at their law firms control billing. In that process, I have seen these law firms charge hourly for paralegal and administrative work. I have also see them circumvent the GAL order controlling fees and attempt to strong arm litigants into paying more than permitted or ordered by the court.

There needs to be clear direction that it is not law firms that are contracting the GALs, but the GALs are contracting directly with the court. In other words, the "privity" needs to be directly between the GAL themselves and the court, not through their law firms.

I would be happy to discuss this further if necessary.

R. Sybrandy

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