



Professional

Managing Attorney, Parents Representation Program, Washington State Office of Public Defense, June 2022 - Present

- Manage contracts for attorneys representing parents, guardians, and custodians in dependency/termination cases.
- Evaluate, consider, and approve expert services requests.
- Provide training to contractors and other stakeholders in the dependency and child welfare system on a local, statewide, and national level.
- Actively encourage system improvement efforts, including participating in state and national committees and collaborating in rule and policy changes.

Administrative Law Judge, Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings, September 2020 – June 2022

- Preside over administrative hearings involving appeals of founded findings of abuse and neglect made by DCYF and APS; the entry and enforcement of child support orders; the administration of public assistance benefits; the revocation of business and professional licenses; and the administration of unemployment insurance benefits.
- Develop a clear and complete hearing record, ensuring all factual and legal issues are adequately addressed.
- Demonstrate appropriate judicial demeanor and maintain control of legal proceedings involving multiple parties, including frequent hearings involving *pro se* litigants.
- Prepare timely initial and final written orders, making legally sufficient findings of fact and conclusions of law.

Senior Attorney II, King County Department of Public Defense, July 2012 – September 2020

✚ *Senior Attorney II, Family Defense Unit, July 2012 – December 2017; January 2019 – September 2020*

✚ *Senior Attorney II, Seattle Municipal Court/RALJ appeals, January 2018 – December 2018*

- Represented parents and children in RCW dependency, termination, and guardianship proceedings.
- Litigated 15-20 dependency and termination fact-finding trials on behalf of parent and youth clients.
- Advocated for clients in hundreds of contested motions, review hearings, and 72-hour shelter care hearings.
- Provided mentorship and training for new attorneys, colleagues, and other stakeholders.
- Represented criminal misdemeanor clients at arraignments, warrant return hearings, and revocation hearings.
- Researched, briefed, and argued appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction in King County Superior Court.
 - Honors: awarded Senior Attorney II designation in October 2016.
 - Supervisory Experience:
 - Served as Special Duty Supervisor of Family Defense Unit from June 2019 to August 2019.
 - Rule 9 Intern Supervisor, King County Department of Public Defense (2017, 2018, 2019).

Assistant Attorney General, Washington State Attorney General's Office, September 2006 – July 2012

- Litigated approximately 45 dependency and termination fact-finding trials.
- Advocated on behalf of DSHS/DCYF in hundreds of 72-hour shelter care hearings, motions and review hearings.
- Researched, drafted, and filed persuasive briefing to proactively advance the position of DSHS in motions, review hearings, trials, and other relevant litigation.
- Reviewed and screened termination referrals submitted by DSHS for legal sufficiency.
 - ✓ Honors: awarded Attorney General's Office Excellence Award in 2010 following complex termination trial.
 - Supervisory Experience:
 - Law Clerk Supervisor, Attorney General's Office, Social and Health Services Unit (2010, 2012).
 - Supervisor, Attorney General's Office's Social and Health Services Law Clerk Program (2011).

Rule 9 Legal Intern – Prosecutor, Kenyon Disend, PLLC, May 2005 – May 2006

- Prosecuted five misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor jury and bench trials.
- Managed daily municipal and district court arraignment, pretrial, motion, and contested traffic infraction calendars.
- Briefed and argued two RALJ appeals before King County Superior Court.

Education

✚ **Seattle University School of Law, Juris Doctor, *Summa Cum Laude*, May 2006**

Honors: Dean's List, 2004 – 2005, 2005 – 2006

Publications, Presentations, and Trainings

1. "Interagency Collaboration to Advance Child Welfare and Address Systemic Inequities," American Bar Association National Parent Attorney Conference, April 2024.
2. "Prefiling Representation Done Two Ways: Early Legal Representation and Parent Ally Support to Keep Families Together," American Bar Association National Parent Attorney Conference, April 2024.
3. "Dependency Fact-Finding Hearing," Washington State Juvenile Non-Offender Benchbook, March 26, 2024, available at <https://www.wacita.org/benchbook/chapter-17-fact-finding-hearing/> or <https://www.wacita.org/fact-finding-hearing/>.
4. "You Can Disagree Without Being Disagreeable: But What Is Disagreeable?," Washington Association of Child Advocates Programs (WACAP) Statewide Conference, October 2023.
5. "Let's Change Your Mind: Reducing the Stigma of Mental Illness Among Dependency Practitioners":
 - National Association of Public Defense Virtual Women's Conference, September 2023;
 - Washington State Office of Public Defense (OPD) Parents Representation Program (PRP)/Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA)/Parent for Parent (P4P) Conference, September 2023;
 - ABA National Conference on Interdisciplinary Representation, May 2023;
 - Washington State OPD PRP CLE, October 2022.
6. "Caselaw Update 2023: Ups, Dows, and Twisty-Turns," Washington State Families Stronger Together OPD/OCLA/P4P Conference, September 2023.
7. "Washington State Hasn't Even Started Yet: ICWA and WICWA in the Wake of Brackeen, Part 2," Washington State Families Stronger Together OPD/OCLA/P4P Conference, September 2023.
8. "Keeping Families Together Statutory Overview," Administrative Office of the Courts Judicial Academy, August 2023, May 2023.
9. "Shelter Care," Washington State Juvenile Non-Offender Benchbook, June 26, 2023, available at <https://www.wacita.org/benchbook/chapter-16-shelter-care/> or <https://www.wacita.org/shelter-care/>.
10. "Why Are We Changing? The Road to HB 1227," Island County HB 1227 Summit, June 2023.
11. "HB 1227: Mitigating the Harms of Removal," Island County HB 1227 Summit, June 2023.
12. "HB 1227: Look How Far We've Come!" HB 1227 and HB 1747 Trial/Appellate Attorney Training, Washington State OPD/OCLA Virtual Webinar, June 2023.
13. "HB 1227 Realized: How to Dominate Shelter Care in a Post-1227 World," Washington State OPD/OCLA Virtual Webinar, May 2023.
14. "Evaluating the Evaluators," Washington State Superior Court Judges Association Spring Conference, April 2023.
15. "Depositions: Tools and Tricks of the Trade," Washington State Office of Public Defense OPD PRP Virtual Webinar, March 2023.
16. "#SAYHERNAME: The Intersection of the Child Welfare System, Law Enforcement, and Other Barriers to Family Reunification, and How Family Advocates Can Help Flip the Script, National Association of Public Defense Virtual CLE, March 2023.
17. "Legislative Update 2022: Look How Far We've Come!," Washington State OPD PRP Statewide CLE, October 2022.

18. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Respect Committee – Mental Health Awareness Month Event/Training, Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings, May 2022.
19. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Respect Committee – Spokane Valley All-Staff Meeting Group Presentation, Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings, December 2021.
20. “Mock Negotiations for Shelter Care Hearings,” Presentation, King County Dependency Summit, October 2019.
21. “Discovery Rules and Practice: Getting in the Game,” CLE Training, Washington State OPD PRP Statewide CLE, September 2019.
22. “Strategies to Better Engage Black and Brown Parents in the Dependency System,” Fishbowl Discussion, Washington State OPD PRP CLE, September 2019.
23. Joint interview with KUOW reporter Sylvia Brownstone (public defense perspective on retailers pressuring law enforcement and City of Seattle to bring criminal charges against indigent clients for minor thefts of basic necessities.) See Brownstone, “Homeless man steals clothes from a Seattle Goodwill, goes to jail. His story isn’t unusual,” KUOW, April 17, 2019, available at <https://www.kuow.org/stories/a-homeless-man-steals-clothes-from-a-seattle-goodwill-goes-to-jail-his-story-isn-t-unusual>.
24. “#SayHerName: The Intersection of Law Enforcement, The Criminal Justice System, and Dependency Courts, and How Parent Attorneys Can Help Flip the Script,” American Bar Association National Parent Attorney Conference, April 2019.
25. “Common Hearsay Objections in Family Defense Practice,” Presentation/Training, King County Department of Public Defense (DPD) All-Family Defense Meeting, January 2019.
26. Interview with Seattle Weekly journalist Josh Kelety (defense perspective regarding difficulties of the cash bail system for indigent and homeless clients.) See Kelety, “Locked Up and Poor,” Seattle Weekly, September 25, 2018, available at <https://www.seattleweekly.com/news/locked-up-and-poor/>.
27. “Depositions 101: Tools and Tricks of the Trade,” CLE Training, King County DPD “Celebrating Harmony” CLE, September 2018; Washington State OPD PRP CLE, June 2018.
28. Law Clerk/Intern Training, Arraignment/Bail/Pre-Trial Release Advocacy for Misdemeanors, King County DPD, June 2018.
29. “Guardianships: The Other Permanent Plan,” Presentation/Training, King County DPD Family Defense Attorneys, December 2017.
30. “The Harm of Removal: Using Empirical Research to Our Advantage in Court,” CLE Training, King County DPD “Cultivating Harmony” CLE, July 2017.
31. Open Adoption Agreement Brown Bag Training, Presentation/Training, King County DPD Family Defense Attorneys, 2017.
32. “A Review of Dependency Caselaw: We Did the Research So You Don’t Have To,” CLE Training, King County DPD “Creating Harmony” CLE, February 2016.
33. Washington State Assistant Attorney General’s Office, Training for Child Protection Services Social Workers, Petition Drafting Training, all Children’s Administration Region 2 Offices, Multiple Presentations.
34. Washington State Assistant Attorney General’s Office, Training for Child Welfare Services Social Workers, 72 to Permanency Training, all Children’s Administration Region 2 Offices, Multiple Presentations.

Volunteer Activities and Court Improvement Committees

Volunteer Activities

1. Defense Attorney and Judicial Officer, Court Simulation, University of Washington Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence, Multiple Presentation Dates, 2012 to date.
2. Member, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Membership Committee, Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings, September 2021 to date; Subcommittee: Litigant Accessibility, January 2022 to June 2022.
3. Member, Social and Health Services Roundtable Planning Committee, Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings, December 2021 to June 2022.
4. Volunteer Defense Attorney, Presentation on Role of Defense Attorney in Dependency Cases, University of Washington Child Welfare Training and Advancement Program, Multiple Presentation Dates, 2012-2018.
5. Coach/Mentor, King County DPD Litigation Talent Academy, February 2017.
6. Volunteer Legal Training, DSHS Children's Administration Region 2 Social Worker Training Academy, Multiple Presentation Dates, 2008-2012.

Court and System Improvement Committee Membership

1. Juvenile Law Section Member, Washington State Bar Association, 2021 to date.
 - Secretary/Treasurer, Secretary/Treasurer, 2022 to date.
 - Co-Chair, Dependency and Child Welfare Committee, 2021-2022
2. Family Justice Initiative Executive Team, July 2022 to date.
3. Administrative Office of the Courts Workgroups:
 - Removal and Placement Decision Workgroup, August 2022 to date.
 - Meaningful Shelter Care Hearings Workgroup/Shelter Care Think Tank, September 2022 to date.
 - Family Well-Being Community Collaborative, January 2023 to date.
 - Dependency Language Workgroup, May 2023 to date.
 - Parent Engagement at Shelter Care Workgroup, June 2023 to date.
4. King County Local Juvenile Court Rules and Manual Workgroup, 2015-2016, July 2022 to date.
5. Washington State Health Care Authority Opioid and Overdose Recovery Plan Recovery Group, September 2022 to date.
6. Coalition for Children of Incarcerated Parents, July 2022 to January 2024.
7. Early Childhood Courts State Advisory Board, October 2022 to January 2024.
8. Juvenile Court Pattern Forms Subcommittee, May 2023 to date.
9. Administrative Law Section Member, Washington State Bar Association, 2021-2022.
10. King County Juvenile Court Early Paternity Testing Workgroup, 2017.
11. King County Juvenile Court Open Adoption Agreement Enforcement Workgroup, 2016-2017.
12. King County DPD Indian Child Welfare Act Workgroup, 2016-2017.
13. King County "Reasonable Efforts" Symposium Planning Committee, 2011.
14. Volunteer Coordinator, Washington State DSHS Children's Justice Conference, 2007-2008.

Washington State Bar Association
Juvenile Law Section
By Email

April 4, 2023

Dear respected members of the Juvenile Law Section,

It would be a privilege to continue to serve the Juvenile Law Section as the Secretary/Treasurer for 2024-2025. For over 17 years, I have devoted my legal career to the practice primarily to dependency law. I have also served the Juvenile Law Section as the Secretary/Treasurer for the 2023-2024 term, and as the Dependency and Child Welfare Committee Co-Director during the prior term. I believe my legal experience, and my service to the Section, will help me continue to work with the Executive Committee in making tangible differences for Section members and for the communities our Section impacts.

I currently work as a Managing Attorney with the Parents Representation Program at the Washington State Office of Public Defense. In this role, I manage the contracts of the attorneys who directly represent indigent parents, guardians, and legal custodians in dependency and termination proceedings. I provide technical assistance, approval for expert service funds, and referrals for social workers, experts, and other assistance to ensure that parents receive high-quality legal assistance in these incredibly crucial legal proceedings. Part of my duties and responsibilities involve managing two important programs that work to prevent families from entering the child welfare court system: I manage the contracts for our state's three pre-filing legal representation programs, and I manage the state's new Voluntary Placement Agreement Legal Consultation Hotline. I also have years of direct representation experience, both as a defense attorney representing parents and as an Assistant Attorney General representing the Department in child welfare cases. My current employment, and my past experience, familiarizes me with the types of critical issues our Section should be addressing. For example, this past year, I have worked with the Executive Committee to find and fund child welfare-related scholarship opportunities for Section members. I have also worked with the CLE Coordinator and other Executive Committee members to arrange a three-part mini-CLE series focused around the intersections between immigration and child welfare.

Over this past year, I have served as the Secretary/Treasurer. This is a difficult role that requires a substantial amount of organization and attention to the details of the Section. I take minutes at each Section meeting, and I send reminders to Section members prior to every Section meeting. I have substantial responsibilities to ensure that Section elections occur as required by the bylaws. I am required to prepare the Section's budget, and I must receive approval of the budget from the WSBA. This year, our Section has worked on updating our website, and I have collected information to update and assist in customizing various portions of the website. I work closely with the Chair and the Chair-Elect to ensure the Section's obligations are met, that Executive Committee positions are filled, and that the Section continues to grow and fulfill its purpose.

I hope to continue in my current role as the Secretary/Treasurer for the upcoming year. I appreciate the Section's consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/Marci Comeau