

May 16, 2023

Snohomish County Council  
Robert J. Drewel Building  
Eighth floor  
3000 Rockefeller Ave., M/S 609  
Everett, WA 98201

RE: South Division Snohomish County District Court Judge Position

Dear Councilmembers Nehring, Dunn, Peterson, Mead, and Low,

I am writing to express my interest in being selected as the South Division District Court Judge for the Snohomish County District Court.

My experience qualifies me because of the breadth of my work; my regular practice in district courts, municipal courts, superior court, and administrative courts; and my experience as a *pro tem* judicial officer. I have direct experience as a *pro tem* in Snohomish County District Courts, including South Division court itself and the jail calendar which encompasses all District Courts. I also have experience as a *pro tem* in Edmonds, Everett, Lynnwood, and Monroe Municipal courts as well as King County Superior Court for juvenile dependency. In my tenure as a *pro tem* in District and Municipal Courts, I have presided over arraignments, trial confirmations, pre-trial hearings, mental health court, name changes, protective orders, criminal and civil motions, infractions, *ex parte* civil matters, small claims, and probation hearings in district and municipal courts. My *pro tem* work in King County has included contested 72-Hour Shelter Care Hearings, Family Treatment Court (FTC) therapeutic court hearings, juvenile dependency review hearings and motions, and others.

My practice has included court-appointed and private criminal practice in local courts of limited jurisdiction. Early in my career, I appeared as a Rule 9 Intern for the City of Everett in Everett Municipal Court, single-chairing multiple criminal jury trials and calendars, including the jail calendar. Once licensed, I began conflict appointed criminal defense representation. This included jury trials, motions, and all manner of calendars. These experiences allowed me to see municipal courts and criminal cases from both sides of the litigation spectrum.

I have other relevant litigation experience outside of criminal law. I have been court appointed and private counsel for protective orders in superior and district courts. I have substantial experience in juvenile dependency. I have represented many clients in family law, Worker's Compensation, BECCA Bill, and personal injury matters. In many cases, I was the sole practitioner in these areas of law in my office and I needed to use my resources – including legal research and attorney network – to solve problems on unique legal issues. This wide variety of experience in civil law is uniquely important for district court judges who are tasked with understanding civil procedure and hearing civil matters.

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Additionally, my work for my law firm as a partner has given me a focus on administration. I coordinate budgets, adjust expenses, garner additional income, perform human resource tasks, and plan for long-term goals. This work has been an important reminder that legal practice does not only include issues related to the law, but also practical managerial issues of running an organization.

I am especially proud of my work, along with my colleagues, in the creation of the FIRST Legal Clinic. The legal clinic began as an idea in 2018 to provide representation to families at risk of CPS removal of newborns. The legal clinic officially began *pro bono* representation in July 2019 with an ultimate goal of funding the work. Using preliminary data from a few dozen clients, our team of three attorneys and one parent ally secured public, private, and legislative funding. After representing parents for free for two years, the legal clinic secured a legislative budgetary proviso for the 2021-2023 biennium. In this short time, we grew from an unfunded idea to a funded Washington State nonprofit with 501(c)(3) recognized status. We have spoken across the country about the creation and work of the clinic. Our clients and clinic have been featured in newspaper and online periodicals, including the Seattle Times. The clinic and its participants have been recognized with local, statewide, and national awards.

I am seeking the position of South Division District Court Judge of Snohomish County District Court driven by my passion for judicial work and the opportunity to serve my community. As a *pro tem* judge, I am deeply committed to upholding the core values of respect, rule of law, and efficiency. Recognizing the daunting nature of court proceedings for all participants, including defendants, victims, and attorneys, I firmly believe that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Equally important, I prioritize the paramount principles of laws, court rules, and due process, ensuring a fair and just legal environment. Balancing the importance of these principles, I am dedicated to efficiently handling cases while ensuring that every individual has their case heard with due care. Upholding accountability for violations of the law is a vital aspect of my role, and I am proud to have upheld these values as a *pro tem* judge, assuring their continuation as a dedicated sitting judicial officer.

I also bring unique skills in data and technology, increasing access to justice via lived experience, and connecting community stakeholders. In my role at the law firm, I took charge of information technology resources due to my proficiency in technology from early exposure to computers. Despite limited resources and a small team, I handle tasks such as setting up computers, maintaining electronic filing systems, troubleshooting issues, and ensuring security. I provide training to colleagues on various software and technologies, while also building data systems such as a comprehensive QuickBooks accounting system and the entry data collective system for FIRST Legal Clinic. In my work with clients, I recognize the power of lived experience through programs like Parent for Parent and parent allies within the FIRST Legal Clinic to provide support for those who are struggling. This lived experience also played a crucial role in advocating for system improvements through client engagement with legislators and professionals. I also have focused on connecting community stakeholders and creating

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coordinated support teams to meet clients' diverse needs. The successful establishment of the FIRST Legal Clinic involved partnerships with hospitals, organizations, and funding sources, demonstrating the power of collaboration and networking.

Snohomish County is my home. I was raised in Edmonds, Bothell, and Everett. I graduated from Meadowdale High School while attending Running Start at Edmonds Community College. I currently live in Mountlake Terrace, having recently moved from Lynnwood, with my wife and two young sons. We go to the Lynnwood pool, take the buses to get around, and go to the beaches in Edmonds and Mukilteo. Our family has connections and activities in all Snohomish County Districts. I am directly vested in the safety and improvement of our community as it grows and I care about the county's future.

Thank you for this consideration for an opportunity in the Snohomish County District Court. I believe the breadth of my experience as an attorney, my dedication as a *pro tem* judicial officer, and my unique skills qualify me for this position. Please let me know if you would like any additional information and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



NEIL WEISS

# NEIL WEISS

WSBA #45923 ▪ 22904 40<sup>th</sup> Pl W ▪ Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043 ▪ (425) 739-5229 ▪ weiss@abclawgroup.net

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Partner, ABC Law Group** *January 2017 - Present*  
Everett, WA

- Representing court-appointed indigent litigants in misdemeanor criminal law, felony criminal law, juvenile dependency, ARY/CHINS, and protection orders, including jury trials, bench trials, and contested hearings
- Practicing in private litigation in criminal law, juvenile dependency, administrative law, workers' compensation, family law, civil litigation, and personal injury, including administrative, bench, and jury trials
- Administering law firm, including long-term planning, budgeting, administration, and operational decision-making
- Managing office, including training, day-to-day operations, and personnel management

**Judge Pro Tem, Snohomish County District Courts** *January 2020 - Present*  
Snohomish County, WA

- Preside over district court cases and calendars, including jail, arraignments, trial confirmations, felony PC calendars, name changes, protective orders, motions, infractions, ex parte civil matters, small claims, and probation hearings

**Judge Pro Tem, Edmonds, Everett, Lynnwood, and Monroe Municipal Courts** *August 2020 - Present*  
Snohomish County, WA

- Preside over municipal court cases and calendars, including jail, arraignments, motions, mental health court, pre-trial, probation, and infractions

**Commissioner Pro Tem, King County Superior Court** *September 2019 - Present*  
Seattle and Kent, WA

- Preside over juvenile dependency court cases for King County Superior Court, including motions, Permanency Planning Hearings, SIJS Hearings, Vulnerable Adult Guardianship Hearings, Family Treatment Court (FTC) therapeutic court hearings, and Termination and Dependency Preliminary Hearing Calendars
- Preside over contested 72-Hour Shelter Care Hearings, 'empty-chair' dependency fact finding hearings and 'empty-chair' termination trials including application of rules of evidence and witness testimony

**Lead Attorney, FIRST Legal Clinic** *July 2019 - Present*  
Various Counties, WA

- Created pro bono legal clinic for pregnant women and mothers of newborns to prevent newborn removal from families by interacting directly with state agencies, providing legal advice, and organizing safety plans and case management services
- Provided hundreds of hours of pro bono legal services for dozens of mothers to establish program efficacy
- Established a WA non-profit, 501(c)(3) approved business entity
- Utilizing synergistic teamwork in a dynamic, fast-paced environment with a limited number of attorneys and parent allies with lived experience
- Providing on-going legal services to parents, including after-hours, weekend, and emergent calls during active CPS investigations
- Garnering financing, including legislative budget proviso, public grants, and private funding
- Developing and maintaining data collection and statistical analysis systems

- Speaking and teaching on pre-filing legal representation and model development nationwide
- Managing conflict attorney and parent ally contracting, administration, and personnel

**Staff Attorney, ABC Law Group**

*May 2013 - Dec 2016*

Everett, WA

- Practiced in Juvenile dependency and termination cases, including 72-hour shelter care hearings
- Represented indigent clients as conflict criminal cases with City of Everett, including serving as Mental Health Court conflict counsel
- Practiced private civil litigation, including family law, juvenile dependency, wills, and administrative law

**Rule 9 Intern, ABC Law Group**

*January 2013 - May 2013*

Everett, WA

- Litigated juvenile dependency and termination cases, including trials and motions

**Rule 9 Intern, Baker, Lewis, Schwisow, and Laws PLLC, City of Everett Defense** *August 2012 - Dec 2012*

Everett, WA

- Handled arraignments, probation hearings, contested motions, Participated in plea negotiations

**Rule 9 Intern, City of Everett Prosecutor's Office**

*June 2011- June 2012*

Everett, WA

- Litigated jury and bench trials from start to finish; Handled jail calendars, arraignments, probation hearings, contested hearings, and administrative hearings
- Reviewed probable cause and recommended charging decisions on law enforcement referrals

**Extern for the Hon. Kenneth L. Cowsert, Snohomish County Superior Court**

*Summer 2010*

Everett, WA

- Researched legal issues ranging from criminal law to civil motions; Wrote memos and briefed cases to provide my own opinion of potential rulings

## EDUCATION

**Seattle University School of Law, Seattle, WA**

*June 2009 - May 2012*

J.D., *magna cum laude*

CALI Awards: Criminal Procedure Adjudicative and Judicial Externship Seminar

Awarded Two Scholarships, Trustee Scholarship and Year-End Scholarship

**Washington State University, Pullman, WA**

*August 2006 - December 2008*

B.A. Business Administration – Accounting

**Antelope Valley College, Lancaster, CA**

*September 2004 - May 2006*

A.S. Business Administration

**Edmonds Community College, Lynnwood, WA**

*September 2002 - May 2004*

## TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

**Proficient or Familiar with the following software:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ▪ WA Judicial Information System (JIS)          | ▪ Tyler Tech Odyssey Case Management System |
| ▪ WA Judicial Access Browser System (JABS)      | ▪ Codesmart Inc. oCourt                     |
| ▪ Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook) | ▪ Lazerfiche Case Management Systems        |
| ▪ Zoom Video Conferencing                       | ▪ Tableau Data Visualization                |
| ▪ Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing            | ▪ Intuit Quickbooks                         |
| ▪ Tyler Technologies eFileWA                    | ▪ SCOMIS                                    |

## BOARD MEMBERSHIPS

- **Sound Pathways (Previously dba Pacific Treatment Alternatives)** - Board Member, 2018 – Present; Treasurer 2021 - Present
- **FIRST Legal Clinic** – Vice President - 2021 - Present

## PRESENTER AT CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATIONS (CLEs)

- **2023 Administrative Office of the Courts Dependency Judicial Training Academy - Safety Planning for Families Segment** - May 16, 2023 – Over Zoom
- **2023 Children’s Justice Conference - FIRST Legal Clinic: A Medical Legal Partnership** - April 19 2023 – Tacoma, WA
- **2023 Administrative Office of the Courts - Family & Youth Justice Program - WA Attorney Academy on Reasonable & Active Efforts** - March 23 and 24, 2023; upcoming July dates – Over Zoom
- **2022 Saginaw, Michigan Presentation via National Center For Juvenile Justice - Critically Unreasonable: Trial Advocacy at Shelter Care Hearings** - October 6, 2022 - Over Zoom
- **2022 OPD’s Parent Representation Program Statewide Conference - Critically Unreasonable: Trial Advocacy at Shelter Care Hearings** - October 4, 2022 - Wenatchee, WA
- **2022 OPD’s Parent Representation Program Statewide Conference - FIRST Let’s Prevent Family Separation - 101** - October 4, 2022 - Wenatchee, WA
- **2022 ABA National Conference on Parent Representation - SKILLS: Critically Unreasonable: Trial Advocacy at Initial Removal Hearings** - April 8, 2022 - Tysons Corner, VA
- **2022 ABA National Conference on Access to Justice for Children and Families - FIRST Legal Clinic: A Medical Legal Partnership** - April 5, 2022 - Tysons Corner, VA
- **2021 44th National Child Welfare Law Conference, National Association of Counsel for Children - The FIRST Clinic: A Medical-Legal Community Collaboration Supporting Parents and Newborns with NOWS (Newborn Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome)** - August 15, 2021 - Denver, CO
- **2019 Defending Washington Families: Statewide PRP CLE - From Intake to Reunification, and Intake to Other Permanency Options - An Overview of Dependency Procedure** - September 16, 2019 - Wenatchee, WA
- **2018 Defending Washington Families: Statewide PRP CLE - Contesting Shelter Care Hearings** - June 4, 2018 - Wenatchee, WA
- **2018 CITA Peer Partnership Training - Legally Free Child Training** - March 9, 2018 - Mt. Vernon, WA
- **2017 OCLA Community Partnership Training - Legally Free Child Training** - May 19, 2017 - Everett, WA

## AWARDS

- **2022 Amara Walt Zabriskie Award** (for FIRST Legal Clinic)
- **2021 Children’s Bureau Champion Award**, United States Department of Health and Human Services (for FIRST Legal Clinic)
- **2021 Washington Defender Association Certificate of Recognition**
- **2021-2022 Public Service & Leadership Award** - Washington Young Lawyers Committee (WYLC)
- **2020 Everett Herald Business Journal Emerging Leaders** - Local Civic Award

## REFERENCES

- Taila Ayay
  - Founding Partner, ABC Law Group; Executive Director, FIRST Legal Clinic
  - Phone - (425) 953-5699
  - Email - ayay@abclawgroup.net
  - 6303 Wetmore Ave
  - Everett, WA 98203
  
- Valerie Bouffiou
  - The Honorable Judge, Lynnwood Municipal Court
  - Phone - (425) 670-5100
  - Email - vbouffiou@lynnwoodwa.gov
  - 19321 44th Ave W
  - Lynnwood, WA 98036-5664
  
- Kari Forbes
  - King County Superior Court Bailiff
  - Phone - (425) 214-3801
  - Email - kforbes@kingcounty.gov
  - 1211 East Alder Street
  - Seattle, WA 98122-5593
  
- Martin Hodges
  - Attorney, Law Office of Martin W. Hodges
  - Phone - (425) 210-6703
  - Email - martinh@martinwhodges.com
  - 3400 188th St SW, Ste 210
  - Lynnwood, WA 98037
  
- Jennifer Justice
  - Parent Ally, FIRST Legal Clinic
  - Phone - (425) 344-7009
  - Email - firstclinic.jennifer@gmail.com
  - 6303 Wetmore Ave
  - Everett, WA 98203
  
- Amy Kaestner
  - The Honorable Judge, Everett Municipal Court
  - Phone - (425) 257-8778
  - Email - AKaestner@everettwa.gov
  - 3028 Wetmore Ave
  - Everett, WA 98201

- Whitney Rivera
  - The Honorable Judge, Edmonds Municipal Court
  - Phone - (425) 771-0210
  - Email - whitney.rivera@edmondswa.gov
  - 250 5th Ave N
  - Edmonds, WA 98020-3146
  
- Flint Stebbins
  - Partner, Stebbins Ullrich
  - Phone - (425) 346-5341
  - Email - flint@stebbinsullrich.com
  - 3216 Wetmore Ave., Suite 202
  - Everett, WA 98201
  
- Nicole Wagner
  - The Honorable Commissioner, Snohomish County Superior Court
  - Phone - (206) 477-2750
  - Email - nicole.wagner@snoco.org
  - 3000 Rockefeller Ave
  - Everett, WA 98201
  
- Gina WasseMiller
  - Office of Public Defense Contracted Social Worker
  - Phone - (425) 583-8377
  - Email - ginawassemillerprp@gmail.com
  - 6303 Wetmore Ave
  - Everett, WA 98203



The application for appointment for Neil Weiss has been withheld from the online materials.

Pursuant to RCW 42.56 a copy of this document may be requested through a [public records request](#).