

Superior Court for the State of Washington  
for the County of King

KETU SHAH  
PRESIDING JUDGE  
DEPARTMENT 50  
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KING COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
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March 6, 2024

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits the report evaluating the new civil protection order process as called for by Ordinance 19546 Section 35, Proviso P1, Subsection B, and a proposed motion that would, if enacted, acknowledge receipt of the report. In consultation with the Executive, we respectfully submit these items directly to the Council for review.

As required, the enclosed report provides an evaluation of improvements made to the new civil protection order process throughout the pilot period. The report includes recommendations for the protection order program based on lessons learned, stakeholder feedback solicited, and performance metrics monitored throughout the pilot period.

The enclosed report demonstrates the progress that the Department of Judicial Administration and King County Superior Court have made in implementing HB 1320 requirements and improving the civil protection order process based on stakeholder feedback and program performance. The collaborative development of the Civil Protection Order Pilot Program has resulted in several improvements to civil protection order procedures. These changes have improved the experiences of parties navigating the civil protection order process.

However, the significant rise in the number of civil protection order petitions (28% higher than pre-pandemic levels), the increased complexity of the process, and the increase in the number of hearings (for both protection order petitions and weapons surrender orders) are straining our ability to manage these cases. Not only is continuation of the pilot program funding needed, additional resources are required to keep up with this challenging workload.

Thank you for your consideration of this report. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council to ensure that the civil protection order services supported by King County Superior Court and the Department of Judicial Administration advance our common goal of improving access to the justice system.

Sincerely,

*Ketu Shah*

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JUDGE KETU SHAH  
Presiding Judge

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Wendy Soo Hoo, Lead Staff, Law and Justice Committee

Catherine Cornwall, Director and Superior Court Clerk, Department of Judicial Administration

Shannon Braddock, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Karan Gill, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Mina Hashemi, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive