



# Office of Professional Regulation

OF THE SUPREME COURT OF IOWA

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CLERK SUPREME COURT

## MEMORANDUM AND RULE PROPOSAL

It is no secret that Iowa is facing a shortage of certified shorthand reporters, be it official reporters or freelancers. While programs at Des Moines Area Community College and Black Hawk Community College are working to train students to become stenomachine reporters, there are currently more vacant official court reporter positions than there are graduating students, and the deficit will continue as current reporters retire. This shortage has and will continue to impact the legal process and the legal practice. It is a crisis. We simply need more court reporters.

The quickest way to obtain more court reporters is to expand the definition of “certified shorthand reporters” to include both stenomachine and stenomask reporters. Iowa is one of only a handful of states that limit court reporters to stenomachine. Most states allow both stenomachine and stenomask reporting. Some entities, such as the U.S. Military, only use stenomask. Allowing stenomask would expand the pool of potential reporters to include military veterans as well as those who are currently students in stenomask programs. It is time for Iowa to consider allowing stenomask.

Stenomask reporters who have the Certified Verbatim Reporter (CVR) designation from the National Verbatim Reporters Association are subject to the same speed and accuracy requirements as stenomachine reporters with an Registered Professional Reporter certification from the National Court Reporters Association. The proposed rules incorporate this and expand the definition of certified shorthand reporters to include those with the CVR designation. Such reporters would be subject to the same rules and requirements as stenomachine reporters.