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## Why So Much Legalese To Read/Sign? (June 27, 2010)

I have modified/amended my website to include caveats about the term 'paralegal' and 'debt relief agency' per the request of Martin L. Smith, esq. for Robert D. Miller, Jr, the U.S. Trustee in the Western District of Washington. Thus, I now require signatures acknowledging the reams of legal minutiae I was compelled to add. Despite having always been a proponent of trying to keep things reasonably simple for my clients, it would appear a 'crackdown' is underway to discourage non-attorneys (paralegals, et al) from providing services the public seeks to gain meaningful access to the courts.

Interestingly, Black's Law Dictionary (4<sup>th</sup> rev.) does not contain the term, 'paralegal'. But the Wisconsin State bar has defined it as: *paralegal — a non-lawyer who performs routine tasks requiring some knowledge of the law and procedures who is employed by a law office or works freelance/independent for various lawyers.* The public, by en large, seems well aware of this distinction and, in fact, seeks out paralegals for precisely this reason. It isn't lost on the public that attorneys, like healthcare, are beyond the means of far too many. This translates into the denial of meaningful access to the courts.

Many pro se litigants would rather have the assistance of a paralegal over an attorney than have no assistance at all. Effective pro bono representation by qualified/willing attorneys is as rare as hen's teeth. Moreover, most of the public 'knows the score'. By that, I mean they're well aware paralegals who cater to pro se litigants are treated by the bar as though they were 'backyard abortionists'. In rare instances, such treatment is justified, but generally it is not. A casual glance at just who receives the lion's share of bar complaints bears this out. Even in most law offices, it is the paralegal who does the heavy lifting.

I apologize in advance for **quadrupling** the amount of preliminary paperwork my clients have to slog through. But the U.S. Dept. of Justice and U.S. Trustee's office have a tremendous amount of weight even when they are wrong or misguided. I'm knowledgeable about bankruptcy code requirements and procedure. I work hard at it and have done so since 1992. But I'm not an attorney or licensed to practice law before the bar. Therefore you must take full responsibility in your legal affairs when hiring me and acknowledge you have been so informed multiple times. The fact this posture plays into the hands of attorneys interested in maintaining inflated fees isn't lost on the public either. But a paternalistically self serving bar won't be persuaded by the obvious. It's primarily attorneys who make up the majority of Congress and our State legislature. They pass the laws.

I will attempt to engage my clients in meaningful conversation under our mutual 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment guarantees, but I can't/won't give 'legal' advice. Please consider writing to your representatives if you'd like a freer hand in choosing your own friends and hirelings. The public's clear preference in this regard appears lost on attorneys and Congress or it's ignored. The 'creeping paternalism' in government is disingenuous and yes, it \*is\* the money!