STATE OF WISCONSIN  )  
COUNTY OF ROCK  ) SS

This is to certify that this Resolution (Resolution No. 18-10A-102) is a true and correct copy of the original as passed by the Rock County Board of Supervisors at a meeting of said Board held in the Rock County Courthouse, Janesville, Wisconsin, on Thursday, October 11, 2018.

Given under my hand and Official Seal of the County of Rock, State of Wisconsin, this 12th day of October, 2018.

Lisa Tollefson
Rock County Clerk
WHEREAS, the Wisconsin child welfare system is county-operated and state-supervised, except Milwaukee County, where the system is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS); and,

WHEREAS, DCF provides insufficient funding to counties for the provision of child abuse and neglect services including prevention, investigation, treatment, and out-of-home placement costs, though the state has primary responsibility for compliance with federal requirements and shares liability for ensuring the system is meeting its obligations to children and families in all 72 counties; and,

WHEREAS, in recent years the state of Wisconsin added numerous mandates and practice expectations which increased county child protective services (CPS) workload and costs; and,

WHEREAS, the opioid and methamphetamine epidemics have brought Wisconsin’s child welfare system to a point of crisis, with increasing concern about the system’s ability to meet its obligations to children and families; and,

WHEREAS, the capacity for counties to continue to bear the lion’s share of financial responsibility to address this crisis has been exhausted, as rising county contributions to the CPS system have far outpaced increases to the DCF Children and Family Aids allocation and counties have used reserve funding to cover CPS expenses and increase staffing; and,

WHEREAS, Rock County’s county contribution for CPS services increased by seventy percent from 2012 to 2017 ($5.2 to $8.8 million); and,

WHEREAS, Rock County’s DCF Children and Family Aids allocation increased by thirteen percent from 2012 to 2018 ($2.76 to $3.12 million); and,

WHEREAS, maintaining sufficient resources for Wisconsin’s child welfare system is critical to secure the safety and future of our most vulnerable children; and,

WHEREAS, without a proportional increase in the DCF Children and Family Services allocation, the CPS system has been stressed for over a decade, causing caseloads for CPS workers to grow to unreasonable levels, contributing to high levels of staff turnover in some counties and an overrun of out-of-home care costs above what counties can sustain within available resources; and,

WHEREAS, in Rock County the average daily census of children in a foster care placement was 80 in 2012 and 154 in 2017; and,

WHEREAS, Wisconsin’s CPS system leaves significant gaps in state-level oversight for all counties except Milwaukee County, including the absence of caseload standards, no process for regular legislative evaluation and prioritization of CPS needs and the absence of a legislative committee that provides regular policy guidance concerning CPS system issues such as adequate funding, performance, cost sharing and long-term stability; and,
Requesting Increased Funding and Oversight Reforms for Wisconsin’s Child Protective Services System

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WHEREAS, along with DMCP, all eleven of Wisconsin’s peer states with county-administered CPS systems have either adopted caseload standards for CPS caseworkers, completed thorough workload studies as a basis of determining funding needs, or otherwise have made significant recommendations related to keeping CPS workloads manageable; and,

WHEREAS, the children within Wisconsin’s CPS system are too important to allow the current level of under resourcing, oversight gaps and, disparity of attention, while shifting the burden to property taxpayers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled this 11th day of October, 2018, does hereby request that the state of Wisconsin increase the Children and Family Aids Allocation to counties in the 2019-21 state biennial budget by $30 million annually in order to cover a greater share of out-of-home care costs and increase staffing levels based on the caseload standards developed by the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) so Wisconsin’s CPS system can meet its obligations; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association urges the state of Wisconsin to close critical oversight gaps by creating legislative mechanisms to review the CPS resource needs of all counties as part of the biennial budget process and ensure an appropriate committee provide ongoing policy guidance to respond to emerging CPS trends and ongoing system needs; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Governor Scott Walker, Department of Children and Families Secretary Eloise Anderson, Department of Administration Secretary Ellen Nowak, area legislators, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Respectfully submitted,

HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

Brian Knudson, Chair
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FISCAL NOTE:

This resolution is advisory only and has no direct fiscal impact on Rock County operations in and by itself.

Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

Advisory only.

Richard Greenlee
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Recommended.

Josh Smith
County Administrator
Executive Summary

Requesting Increased Funding and Oversight Reforms for Wisconsin’s Child Protective Services System

The Child Welfare System across Wisconsin has reached a point of crisis with significant increases in the volume of children and families receiving services and increasing complexity of the needs of these families. Statewide, the number of children placed in out of home care has increased dramatically in recent years. In Rock County, the average daily census of children in a child welfare foster care placement has grown from an average daily census of 80 in 2012, to 154 in 2017.

As needs have escalated, Counties have carried the fiscal burden while state aid has failed to keep up with the increasing costs. Since 2012, Rock County’s local contributions to child welfare have increased by 70%, while our state allocation has increased by only 13%.

Caseloads for child welfare workers have reached untenable levels and, unlike other county run child welfare systems across the nation, the state of Wisconsin has failed to adopt formal caseload standards or recommendations to assure that adequate care can be provided to keep children safe.

This resolution requests that the State of Wisconsin increase the Children and Families Aids Allocation by 30 million dollars annually in the 2019-2021 biennial budget and advocates that formal legislative oversight mechanisms be established to assure appropriate policies and adequate resources are in place to support the Child Welfare System needs in every county.