



22 EAST MIFFLIN STREET, SUITE 900
MADISON, WI 53703
TOLL FREE: 1.866.404.2700
PHONE: 608.663.7188
FAX: 608.663.7189
www.wicounties.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Marcie Rainbolt, Government Affairs Associate

DATE: May 24, 2019

SUBJECT: 2019-2021 State Biennial Budget – Items before the Joint Committee on Finance on May 28, 2019

In regard to items scheduled for consideration by the Joint Committee on Finance on May 16, 2019, please consider the following recommendations of the Wisconsin Counties Association:

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY	
LFB PAPER #	RECOMMENDATION
Circuit Courts	Support a stand-alone motion to provide \$7.5 million to counties for the increased cost of court appointed attorneys.
759	Support Alternative 2.
545	Support Alternative A.2.

Attached please find rationale for the items listed above. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the WCA office at 608-663-7188.

LFB PAPER

CIRCUIT COURTS

RECOMMENDATION: Support a stand-alone motion to provide \$7.5 million to counties for the increased cost of court appointed attorneys.

Rationale:

- The Wisconsin Supreme Court has approved an increase in the court appointed attorney compensation rate increasing the cost from \$70 per hour to \$100 per hour for all 72 counties beginning January 2020.
 - The increase to \$100 per hour for counties while holding the SPD's Office harmless will only increase the financial burden to counties as more SPD attorneys may refuse a case until it becomes the county's responsibility at a higher compensation rate.
 - Counties will also have to pay the new inflated rate of \$100 per hour for DEAN appointments and Guardian ad Litem appointments.
 - WCA supports additional funding to offset the fiscal burden of providing \$100 per hour for court appointed attorneys.
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#759

**UW-EXTENSION COOPERATIVE
COUNTY AGRICULTURE AGENTS (UW)**

RECOMMENDATION: Support alternative 2.

Rationale:

- Cooperative Extension provides education staff to counties for multiple services including agriculture, elderly assistance, economic development, 4-H, and more.
- Funding for Extension educators is a shared partnership between local counties and Cooperative Extension.
- Since 2014, funding reductions have totaled \$3.4 million to Cooperative Extension, resulting in a decline of 30 county-based educators.
- The funding reduction has resulted in staff vacancies throughout the state and is manifesting itself in visible county and citizen discontent.

