

DUNN COUNTY, WISCONSIN
RESOLUTION NO. 02

Requesting the Wisconsin Counties Association to Include Support For Increased State Funding for Circuit Courts, District Attorneys' Offices and the State Public Defender in its Platform and to Advocate for Legislative Action in it 2019-2021 Legislative Agenda

WHEREAS, the circuit courts are the trial courts for the state court system in Wisconsin, and are divided into branches with at least one branch in every county except that Buffalo and Pepin Counties are combined to have one branch, and Shawano and Menomonee Counties are combined to have two branches; and

WHEREAS, Circuit courts are funded with a combination of state and county money, with state funds used to pay for salaries of judges, official court reporters, and reserve judges, while counties are responsible for all other operating costs; and

WHEREAS, the Director of State Courts recommends that the legislature create additional judgeships in those counties showing the greatest need according to the Judicial Needs Assessment; and

WHEREAS, adequately staffed District Attorney's Offices are critical for effective prosecution of criminal cases throughout the State of Wisconsin, and failure to provide adequate levels of staffing has an adverse impact on public safety and victims' rights; and District Attorney's offices throughout the state are experiencing increases in caseloads and case complexity, requiring greater prosecutor time and resources; and

WHEREAS, both the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Wisconsin provide that persons accused of crime have the right to counsel, which is provided to persons meeting income eligibility guidelines by the Office of the State Public Defender ["SPD"] or because of conflict or other reason by private attorneys appointed by the SPD, with almost 40% of all SPD cases being appointed to private attorneys; and

WHEREAS the compensation rate for private attorneys appointed by the SPD, which has not been increased since 1995, is the lowest in the nation, failing to even cover appointed attorneys' overhead costs, resulting in fewer attorneys accepting SPD appointments and creating an increasing burden on the courts and Wisconsin counties due to costs and delays in court proceedings, to the detriment of victims of crime, witnesses, law enforcement agencies, and persons accused of crime; and

WHEREAS, it has been the policy of WCA to support and advocate for adequate funding for courts, and district attorney and public defender offices to ensure speedy disposition of criminal cases as guaranteed to crime victims and ensure fair administration of justice in all counties;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Dunn County Board of Supervisors hereby requests the Wisconsin Counties Association include support for adequate state funding of the courts, the State Public Defender, and District Attorney's offices through its platform, and to actively advocate legislative action through its 2019-2021 Legislative Agenda.

Offered this 19th day of June, 2019, at Menomonie, Wisconsin.

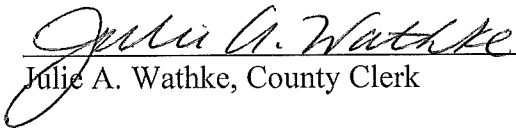
OFFERED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Adopted on: June 19, 2019



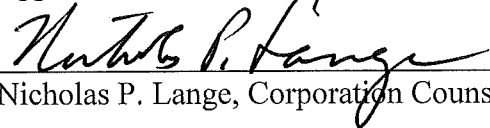
David Bartlett, Chair

ATTEST:



Julie A. Wathke, County Clerk

Approved as to Form and Execution:



Nicholas P. Lange, Corporation Counsel

Budget Impact: Adoption of this resolution will have no impact on the 2019 budget.

Background Information: The Dunn County Legislative Agenda includes advocacy for an additional court for Dunn County, increased pay for public defenders, and increased personnel in the office of the District Attorney. Over the past several years eight separate resolutions have been passed by the County Board advocating for these improvements to our court/justice system. These are issue of concern to all county governments in Wisconsin.

The Judiciary and Law Committee supports this resolution being forwarded to the County Board of Supervisors by the Executive Committee. If adopted, this resolution will be forwarded to the Wisconsin Counties Association with a request that it become part of the WCA platform and 2019-2021 Legislative Agenda.