

Re: Requesting Increased Funding and Oversight Reforms for Wisconsin's Child Protective Services System

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 **WHEREAS**, Wisconsin's CPS system leaves significant gaps in state-level oversight for all
25 counties except Milwaukee County, including the absence of caseload standards, no process for
26 regular legislative evaluation and prioritization of CPS needs and the absence of a legislative
27 committee that provides regular policy guidance concerning CPS system issues such as adequate
28 funding, performance, cost sharing and long-term stability; and

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

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

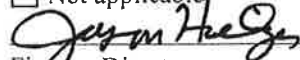
36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Vilas County Board of Supervisors in
37 session this 23rd day of October, 2018, that it hereby requests that the State of Wisconsin increase the
38 Children and Family Aids Allocation to Counties in the 2019-21 State Biennial Budget by \$30
39 million annually, in order to cover a greater share of out-of-home care costs and increase staffing
40 levels, based on the caseload standards developed by the Wisconsin County Human Services
41 Association (WCHSA), in order that Wisconsin's CPS system can meet its obligations; and

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association urges the State of
43 Wisconsin to close critical oversight gaps by creating legislative mechanisms to review the CPS
44 resource needs of all Counties, as part of the biennial budget process and ensure an appropriate
45 Committee provide ongoing policy guidance responding to emerging CPS trends and ongoing system
46 needs; and

47 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to Governor
48 Scott Walker, Department of Children and Families Secretary Eloise Anderson, Department of
49 Administration Secretary Ellen Nowak, Area Legislators, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

FISCAL COMMENT:

- Included within Resolution
 See Attached
 Not applicable



Finance Director

H. R. REVIEW

- Approved
 See Attached
 Not applicable


Human Resources Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT


Corporation Counsel

SUBMITTED BY:


Social Services Board


Alden Bauman, Chair


Erv Teichmiller

Tom Maulson

Marvin Anderson


Ronald Kressin