

1 **RESOLUTION – R2018-10-02**

2
3 To: The Honorable Chair and Members of the Oconto County Board of Supervisors

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5 Re: **In Support of Increased Public Defender Access and Pay**

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7 WHEREAS, criminal cases continue to rise due to a variety of factors including increased drug
8 crimes; and

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10 WHEREAS, both the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Wisconsin
11 provide that persons accused have the right to counsel; and

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13 WHEREAS, in Wisconsin, the Office of the Public Defender provides counsel to those persons
14 meeting income eligibility guidelines for services; and

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16 WHEREAS, judges are being forced to appoint counsel at county expense for persons for whom
17 the public defender cannot find representation due to a lack of available counsel as a result of the low
18 compensation rate; and

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20 WHEREAS, this results in costs of counties to appoint counsel, increased costs to jail persons
21 held pre-trial pending appointment of counsel, inefficiency for courts and law enforcement and a delay in
22 obtaining justice for victims; and

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24 WHEREAS, the rate of compensation for private attorneys has not been increased since 1995
25 and currently is the lowest hourly rate in the nation; and

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27 WHEREAS, this has created a burden on the courts and Wisconsin counties.

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29 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Oconto County Board of Supervisors does
30 hereby urge the State of Wisconsin to provide sufficient resources to the Office of the Public Defender to
31 ensure that the criminal justice system operates effectively and efficiently; and

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State of Wisconsin increase the rate of reimbursement for
34 assigned counsel attorneys to a market rate that will ensure the prompt appointment of counsel and that
35 cases are handled in a timely and efficient manner; and

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37 BE IT RESOLVED that the Oconto County Clerk shall forward a copy of this resolution to Oconto
38 County's State Legislators, Governor Scott Walker, the Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin
39 Towns Association, the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, and each Wisconsin County.

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41 Submitted this 18th day of October, 2018.

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43 BY: LAW ENFORCEMENT/JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

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45 Dennis Kroll, Chair
46 Lowell "Buzz" Kamke
47 Don Bartels, Jr.
48 David Parmentier
49 Melissa Wellens

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52 Reviewed by Corporation Counsel

53 CAM 10.10.2018
54 Initials of Date
55 Corp. Counsel Reviewed

56 Consent Agenda: Yes No

Adopted by vote:

Ayes 29 Nays 0 Absent 1 Abstain 0 Vacant 1