RESOLUTION – R2018-12-09

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

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

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, 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, 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

WHEREAS, along with DMCPS, 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 Oconto County Board of Supervisors 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 Tony Evers, Department of Children and Families, Department of Administration Secretary, area legislators, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office of the Governor
State of Wisconsin
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Office of Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
201 East Washington Avenue, Second Floor
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916

Office of Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Administration
101 E. Wilson Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 7864
Madison, WI 53707
DOASecretarysOffice@wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin Counties Association
Attn: Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf
22 E. Mifflin Street, Suite 900
Madison, WI 53703
diedrick@wicounties.org

Submitted this 20th day of December, 2018.

By: HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

Alan Sleeter, Chair
Loretta Shellman
Karl Ballestad
David Behrand
Judith Buhrandt
Don Girardi
Diane Nichols
Carolyn Barke
Kathy Gohr

STATE OF WISCONSIN } I, Kim Pytleski do hereby certify
County Oconto
that the above is a true and correct copy of the original now on file in the office of the County Clerk and that it was adopted by the Oconto County Board of Supervisors on this date.
Date: 12/20/18 Kim Pytleski County Clerk
(Seal)

Reviewed by Corporation Counsel

Initials of Corp. Counsel — *Date Reviewed* 12-12-18

Consent Agenda: _____ *Yes* ✓ *No*

Adopted by vote:

Ayes 31 *Nays* 0 *Absent* 0 *Abstain* 0