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**From:** Christopher Paulsen  
**To:** Janto, Carrie; Bergum, Susan  
**Date:** 4/16/2018 4:55 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Comment on petition 17-06

>>> Christopher Zachar <[chris@zacharlawoffice.com](mailto:chris@zacharlawoffice.com)> 4/16/2018 4:51 PM >>>  
Dear Clerk:

I write in support of petition 17-06 regarding the private bar compensation rate. I agree with the authors and their positions in full.

I'd like to speak briefly about the human impact of the dearth of appointed counsel. In La Crosse County we now have a dedicated calendar at 10:45 every day for people awaiting appointment of counsel. Every week I watch the same shackled defendants shuffle to the podium in an orange jail uniform so they can hear the circuit judge give them the same speech about the Sixth Amendment right to counsel superseding their statutory right to preliminary hearings, bond hearings, and the overall progress of their cases. These same defendants appear week after week without counsel. They plead for bond reductions and try to explain that they are losing their jobs, their homes, and their families while they wait on an attorney. Witnesses aren't interviewed, evidence isn't preserved, and the lives that these defendants are fighting to preserve fade while they sit in jail. Some of these defendants are unequivocally innocent, but because they are poor they will wait in jail with everyone else.

I make a point of taking as many appointments as I can from the 10:45 calendar because I have always believed that the poorest among us are those that we as attorneys have the greatest obligation to protect. But any single attorney taking an SPD appointment is a bandaid for a bullet wound. We criminalize new conduct, enforce substance abuse-related bond violations, and create new defendants at a far greater rate than I or any other lawyer in the private bar can competently keep up with. There are more new defendants waiting for appointment at 10:45 every time I appear. Until we have substantially more attorneys who are willing and qualified to represent indigent defendants, the problem will only get worse.

The fact that we now need a dedicated calendar to tell the poorest among us that they will have to wait indefinitely for counsel is undeniable proof that our system of justice is at a point of crisis. I urge the Supreme Court to adopt petition 17-06 in full. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Chris Zachar, La Crosse

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