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Sent Via e-mail only: clerk@wicourts.gov

CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
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**CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
OF WISCONSIN**

RE: Rule Petition 17-06, In re petition to amend SCR 81.02

Dear Clerk:

I write in strong support of the Petition to amend SCR 81.02. At \$40.00 per hour, Wisconsin currently has the lowest private bar rate in the nation, a rate unchanged since 1995. These hourly rates are less than the typical attorney's breakeven point and are well below market rate. An increase in the rate will aid in maintaining the quality of legal representation provided to state public defender clients, as well as reducing delays in the court system.

My wife Natalie and I started our law firm in Minocqua twenty-nine years ago. At the time we were two of the youngest members of the Oneida Vilas Forest County Bar Association. Twenty-nine years later, we are still two of the younger members of our local bar association. The difficulty in recruiting lawyers to our rural counties is becoming an increasing problem. One of the significant factors contributing to this recruitment problem is the unreasonably low hourly rates paid to court appointed counsel and State Public Defender counsel. Many lawyers simply cannot take on such assigned cases because it is financially impossible to do so. Inefficiencies in the court system are the inevitable result.

If present trends continue, there will come a time in some of our rural counties where the only lawyers in the county will be the District Attorney and the Corporation Counsel. Increasing the rate of court appointed counsel through the amendment of this rule will greatly improve the prospects of providing quality legal services in rural Wisconsin counties.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

LAWRENCE & TYLER, S.C.



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