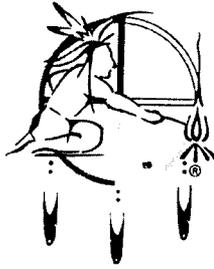


EUGENE L. WHITE-FISH
CHIEF JUDGE

PO Box 340
Crandon, WI 54520
Ph: (715) 478-7255
Fax: (715) 478-5805



FOREST COUNTY POTAWATOMI
TRIBAL COURT

January 16, 2018

Clerk of the Supreme Court
PO Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701
VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL
clerk@wicourts.gov and carrie.janto@wicourts.gov

RE: Petition 17-09

Dear Supreme Court Justices:

I write on behalf of the Wisconsin Tribal Judges Association (WTJA) in support of Petition 17-09 which, if enacted, will increase the pro hac vice fee in order to better fund the Access to Justice Commission. However, WTJA also requests the Court make an amendment to SCR 10.03 which would create an exemption for out-of-state attorneys representing Indian tribes on Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) matters similar to the exemption enjoyed by military counsel.

WTJA supports the overall goal of raising funds for the Access to Justice Commission. The judges in WTJA know firsthand the challenges that unrepresented litigants face in tribal courts and are aware of those same challenges in state courts. The Commission's work of increasing access to the civil justice system for unrepresented low-income Wisconsin residents is important for the entire state and greatly impacts Wisconsin's Indian population.

Many Indian people are low-income and benefit from the Commission's work.

At the same, WTJA recognizes the obstacle that many out-of-state tribes may face in appearing in Wisconsin on matters governed by the federal and Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Acts (WICWA). SCR 10.03 requires payment of \$250 and association with local counsel. For some tribes, this can be a cost that is difficult to meet.

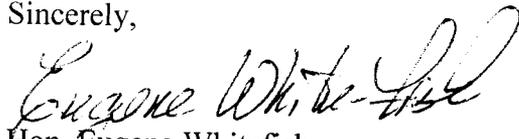
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The ICWA and WICWA were put in place to prevent tribal member children from losing touch with their culture. Indian tribes appearing on ICWA/WICWA matters are exercising the solemn right to protect their tribe's continued existence. The fulfillment of this federal right should not be unduly burdened.

WTJA supports and agrees with the Menominee Tribe's proposed amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene Whitefish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon. Eugene Whitefish

WTJA President

Chief Judge, Forest County Potawatomi Tribal Court

ELW/tb

Cc: WTJA Executive Committee