

January 16, 2018

Clerk of the Wisconsin Supreme Court  
P.O. Box 1688  
Madison, WI 53701-1688

Re: Rule Petition 17-09, In the Matter of the Petition for Amendment to SCR  
10.03(4)(b)2 relating to Pro Hac Vice applications

Dear Honorable Justices,

I am writing in support of Petition 17-09, filed by the Wisconsin Access to Justice Commission (“the Commission”). The Petition requests that the Court increase the fee for Pro Hac Vice admission from \$250 to \$300, with the \$50 increase allocated to the Commission.

As the Executive Director of Legal Action of Wisconsin, the largest provider of indigent civil legal aid in our state, I see daily the challenges facing Wisconsinites who lack access to justice because they cannot afford quality representation. Every year, we provide free, high-quality legal assistance to thousands of low-income Wisconsin residents, and every year we turn away thousands more who we simply cannot help due to lack of resources. The Access to Justice Commission has been a vital partner in the ongoing effort to highlight and address Wisconsin’s justice gap.

The Commission’s work to expand access to civil justice has been, and continues to be, collaborative, creative, and multi-faceted. The Commission has been a vital partner in both educating policymakers, the public at large, the legal community, and other stakeholders about the key role civil legal aid plays in addressing poverty in our state, and convening those partners to work together to support and implement innovative solutions.

As well, the Commission has been a leading force to preserve and expand funding for civil legal aid in our state. In 2017, the Commission’s engagement and leadership were critical to protecting Congressional funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). Additionally, the Commission’s hard work and dedicated commitment helped to ensure a renewed state budget appropriation to meet the civil legal needs of low-income survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking.

The Wisconsin Access to Justice Commission has brought a statewide and strategic approach,

and a necessary urgency, to its mission of expanding access to justice for unrepresented low-income Wisconsin residents. The Commission is succeeding on numerous fronts in its efforts to broaden understanding of the civil legal problems facing low-income Wisconsinites and to build and deepen support for civil legal aid as a critical piece of any anti-poverty agenda.

However, it needs funding to continue operating. Other avenues for funding have not proved successful, and the Wisconsin State Bar's financial support is decreasing. If we are to continue to make progress in addressing our state's justice gap, the Commission must have the funds necessary to remain operational, and this is the best source of funding. I urge the Court to authorize the requested increase.

Sincerely,

David Pifer  
Executive Director  
Legal Action of Wisconsin