

January 11, 2018

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

Re: Petition 17-09 Fee for Pro Hac Vice

Dear Honorable Justices:

I write in support of Petition 17-09, which would increase the pro hac vice admission fee paid by out of state lawyers, with the \$50 increase supporting the operation of the Wisconsin Access to Justice Committee.

As the Executive Director of the 102-year-old Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, I am acutely aware of the difficulties faced by those who, while facing life-altering legal matters, are unable to afford a lawyer to assure equal access and equal justice. We serve thousands of persons annually at the Legal Aid Society, but there are so many more who have to carry their legal burdens alone, into an often unfriendly environment, facing an opponent who has legal representation. The justice gap is enormous.

The Access to Justice Commission has been at the forefront of addressing that gap since it was created by this Court in 2009. Indeed, it is the only statewide organization charged with and working at developing a fair and just system to deliver legal services to the poor.

Before the Commission was created, the Wisconsin access to justice community floundered, with no statewide approach and with legal service organizations dug in and defending their own “turf.” Although it took some time to change minds and broaden vision, the Commission now has become the standard bearer for equal access and equal justice in Wisconsin. The entire legal services community recognizes its value.

I was a charter member of the Access to Justice Commission. I know it must stay operational and vibrant, and needs the funds that would be generated by the increased pro hac vice fee. I encourage the Court to authorize this increase.

Sincerely,

Mike Gonring
Executive Director