



Brighter Tomorrows

505 Douglas Street
Sparta, WI 54656
Phone: (608) 269-7853
Crisis Line: (888) 886-2327
Fax: (608) 269-7063

12/11/2024

Clerk of Supreme Court
Attention: Deputy Clerk-Rules
P.O. Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701-1688

FILED

DEC 17 2024

**CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
OF WISCONSIN**

RE: Petition 24-05 Adjustment to Attorney Assessment for Public Interest Legal Services Fund

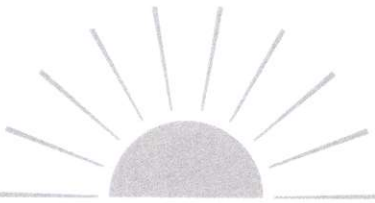
Dear Chief Justice Ziegler and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court:

I am writing on behalf of Brighter Tomorrows in support of Petition 24-05 to increase the Public Interest Legal Services Fund (PILSF) assessment. As an organization, our mission is to work to end domestic violence and sexual assault in Monroe County. We believe that increasing access to civil legal aid is vital to the stabilization and dignity of our communities. This Petition is an important step in that direction.

An individual's ability to access civil legal aid can be lifesaving. Civil legal aid keeps people in their homes and in family-sustaining jobs, empowers individuals and families by resolving consumer debts and ensuring rightful access to income supports, secures support for and protects the rights of crime victims, and helps to extricate survivors of domestic violence from unsafe situations so they can achieve independence and thrive. Access to civil legal aid, however, is distressingly difficult. While one in seven Wisconsinites are eligible for civil legal aid, only 7% of the civil legal problems facing Wisconsin's low-income residents receive any legal help. The gap between the need for services and their availability holds families back from achieving safety, stability, and economic security. At Brighter Tomorrows we understand that increasing the PILSF assessment is one critical mechanism for increasing access to civil legal aid for the population we serve.

Our organization depends on civil legal aid providers to help the survivors of violence that we represent. Civil legal aid providers seek recourse for crime victims when their rights have been violated, and ensure that crime victims have a voice in the courtroom and in determining their path forward. Further, civil legal aid providers help protect survivors' freedom and independence by safeguarding safety and privacy, creating safety plans, obtaining restraining orders and providing representation in family court, and providing information about their rights. Our partnership with civil legal aid providers has been a key component to ensuring survivors are able to be made whole following abuse. Sadly, we also know that for every survivor who can access civil legal help, many more cannot because chronic underfunding has left civil legal aid providers without enough resources to meet the full need.

There are far more low-income Wisconsinites with civil legal problems than there are legal aid lawyers to serve them, and many of those individuals face multiple concurrent civil legal problems. An



Brighter Tomorrows

505 Douglas Street
Sparta, WI 54656
Phone: (608) 269-7853
Crisis Line: (888) 886-2327
Fax: (608) 269-7063

investment in civil legal aid is an investment in justice and in the future health of Wisconsin's legal system. Supporting an increase in the PILSF assessment ensures due process for every Wisconsinite and recognizes the important role of the legal profession in closing the justice gap. We are grateful that the legal community generously shares in this responsibility.

Therefore, we urge you to adopt Petition 24-05 to increase the PILSF assessment, which would increase the provision of civil legal services to low-income Wisconsinites. The positive impact of the Petition would reach far beyond the financial value of the assessment itself. Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to comment on this proposed rule.

Brittany Anderson
Victim Advocate
Brighter Tomorrows