

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

11/21/24



FILED

Re: Petition 24-05

DEC 02 2024

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

CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
OF WISCONSIN

I am writing on behalf of the Catholic Multicultural Center (CMC) in support of Petition 24-05 to increase the Public Interest Legal Services Fund (PILSF) assessment. This petition would increase Public Interest Legal Services Fund (PILF) fees from \$50 to \$100 over two stages. The CMC welcomes and supports people from all backgrounds by meeting immediate needs; providing opportunities for education, integration into the community, and professional growth; and offering community-based activities that honor and respect the many cultures that call this area home. 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.

The CMC and its legal service providers (in the Immigration Legal Services Program) offer their full endorsement of the petition to amend Supreme Court Rule 13.045. Managing Attorney Carmel Capati said, "I am in favor of this. More than ever, low-income families will need increased access to civil legal services." Attorney Jimmy Morrissey added, "I'm on board with the proposed increase in the assessment! More funding for public interest legal services will be for a good cause."

CMC sees firsthand how many low-income individuals are in need of legal services, from family law to workers' rights to mediating tenant-landlord disputes, in addition to the immigration legal services staff provide to low-income individuals and families. In 2023, CMC provided immigration legal services to 672 individuals who otherwise would not have had access to legal representation. These services help clients reunite with their family, obtain permanent residence and citizenship in the United States, and receive authorization to work so they may support themselves and their families.

Only 7% of low-income individuals with a civil legal issue receive legal assistance. Economic status should not preclude our state's lower-income residents from accessing justice. PILSF is the state's only stable, statewide funding source for civil legal aid. An increase to this fund would lead to benefits statewide, helping individuals access justice for families, veterans, tenants, lawful immigrants, and consumers while also providing an \$8.40 return to our state's economy per \$1 invested. We strongly urge you to voice your support for this petition. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Regards,

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Catholic Multicultural Center

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