



December 10, 2024

WI Supreme Court
Clerk of Supreme Court
Attention: Deputy Clerk – Rules
PO Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701 – 1688



FILED

DEC 10 2024

CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
OF WISCONSIN

RE: Petition to the Wisconsin Supreme Court to amend Supreme Court Rule 13.045(1) to increase the annual assessment of attorneys for the Public Interest Legal Services Fund

Dear Deputy Clerk – Rules:

The Wisconsin Elder Justice Coalition brings together key state agencies, statewide organizations, and non-governmental agencies that are focused on strengthening our state's response to elder abuse. This multidisciplinary group works together as a collaborative body to assess the gaps in our various systems including services provided to elder abuse victims.

The Elder Justice Coalition met on December 2, 2024, and passed a motion to support Rule Petition 24-05 Amendment of Supreme Court Rule 13.045 regarding an increase to the annual assessment of attorneys for the Public Interest Legal Services Fund.

The adoption of the petition could allow for the continuation of critical legal services for victims of elder abuse that have been reduced in recent years because of unstable federal funding sources. Elder abuse cases have more than tripled from 2001-2023 according to reports submitted to Adult Protective Services across Wisconsin. In 2022, there were more than 9,600 reported incidents of elder abuse or neglect in Wisconsin, and nearly a quarter of the reports were related to financial exploitation. This growing trend of increased elder abuse will get worse with an older adult population that is set to increase by 72% by 2040. The rise in elder abuse victims has not come with proportional increases in funding at the federal, state, and local levels. The lack of invested resources has created ongoing challenges with increasingly complicated elder abuse cases.

Victims of elder abuse are not guaranteed the right to legal assistance. An increase in the Public Interest Legal Services Fund will help civil legal aid providers to assist elder abuse victims obtain justice through a complicated legal system. It has been shown that one in seven Wisconsin seniors are eligible for civil legal aid, which far outpaces the capacity of legal aid to provide representation. With more funding for legal services, our state will be able to continue these programs negatively impacted by budget cuts and begin to level the playing field for this growing population of elder abuse victims.

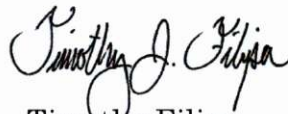
We are grateful that the legal community generously shares in this responsibility for supporting the Public Interest Legal Services Fund. The Coalition includes government attorneys who share concerns about the overall cost of bar due fees. However, members agree that this fund is vital to serving an existing gap for many victims.

This letter serves as a statement of support from the Wisconsin Elder Justice Coalition. We thank you for your careful consideration of this issue and its impact on crime victims. If you have any questions, please contact Laura Nolan at nolanl@uwgb.edu or (920) 465-2772.

Sincerely,



Loreen Glaman
Co-Chair, Elder Justice Coalition
Retired Law Enforcement



Timothy Filipa
Co-Chair, Elder Justice Coalition
Assistant Attorney General