



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF LAKE
255 NORTH FORBES STREET
LAKEPORT, CALIFORNIA 95453

STEPHEN O. HEDSTROM
SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE

(707) 263-2374 EXT 2231
FAX (707) 262-1327

April 11, 2017

Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee

Re: Item 4 Recommendation of the Small Court Dependency Workload Working Group Methodology

Dear Committee Members:

We are writing to express our strong support for the recommendations made by the Small Court Dependency Workload Working Group. We ask that you approve these recommendations and submit to the Judicial Council for final approval.

If these recommendations are not approved, Lake's dependency counsel funding will be reduced by a staggering 60%. At this reduced funding, it will be very difficult to retain the experienced attorneys we have in our juvenile court today. As a small rural court, it is already difficult to recruit and retain experienced, qualified attorneys. This problem is exacerbated because dependency attorneys funded at this reduced level will need to secure other sources of income that will reduce their dependency caseload attention. In addition, it is not worth an attorney's time to maintain training and keep current in complex dependency law for a caseload that provides a very limited portion of their income. If we are able to recruit any attorneys at this significantly reduced rate, it is likely that they will be less experienced and capable.

The recommendations before you today will prevent these devastating consequences in Lake County and many other small courts statewide at a minimal statewide cost.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Stephen O. Hedstrom
Presiding Juvenile Judge

Krista LeVier
Court Executive Officer

From: Judge David Riemenschneider [<mailto:d.riemen@mendocino.courts.ca.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 10:47 AM
To: Will, Don <Don.Will@jud.ca.gov>
Subject: TCBAC--Small Court Dependency Workload Working Group recommendations

Don,

As the sole Juvenile Court judge in one of the "small" counties (Mendocino) listed in the Small Court Dependency Workload Working Group recommendations to the TCBAC, I urge the TCBAC to adopt the recommendations being proposed by the Working Group. While sitting in this assignment for the past 16 months I have seen what the dependency funding cuts of the past two years have done to what has been a robust and effective method of providing high-quality representation to the parents and minors in the dependency system in Mendocino County. The further reductions that are scheduled to occur in the next few years will have the almost certain effect of completely dismantling the ability to continue to provide any semblance of quality representation. The adoption of the recommendations being made by the Small Court Dependency Workload Group, especially the adjustment to the BLS index, will hopefully have the effect of staving off the worst of those consequences. The difference for Mendocino County would be approximately \$48,000, which is truly significant and most likely a game-changer in light of the size of our allocation.

I'd appreciate you sharing my thoughts with the TCBAC for the purpose of its meeting on April 13. Thank you for your oncoming assistance and concern regarding this issue.

Best regards,
David Riemenschneider
Mendocino County Superior Court Judge