

January 16, 2018

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

Dear Honorable Justices:

I am writing in support of Petition 17-09, filed by the Wisconsin Access to Justice Commission. The Petition requests that the Court increase the fee for Pro Hac Vice admission from \$250 to \$300, with the \$50 increase allocated to the Commission.

As the Executive Director of Centro Legal, a nonprofit legal services entity providing free and nearly free legal services in the areas of family law and criminal misdemeanor defense, we work closely with individuals who must navigate the legal system but cannot afford legal representation. Each year, we work with over 2,000 individuals, all of whom must address the legal system to resolve an issue that meaningfully impacts their family. For instance, the bulk of our family law clients are domestic abuse survivors, who must obtain court orders for custody, placement and divorce, which are necessary orders to establish a new, stable and healthy family foundation for themselves and their children. Many of our services are provided for free, and others are provided at a substantial reduction of prevailing market rates, which are still difficult for our clients to afford. Despite that most of our clients are employed, they struggle living in poverty and quite simply cannot afford legal representation.

We have found the Access to Justice Commission to be a vital partner in our efforts to address the gap in legal services. The Commission's work to expand access to legal services has been collaborative and innovative. We have appreciated its strong leadership and efforts to lead policy changes and bring various legal service providers together to provide equal access and justice to those in need in Wisconsin. The entire community, legal and non-legal, owes a debt of gratitude to the Commission.

Funding is necessary for the Commission to continue its work in overcoming legal boundaries and providing equal access and fairness for all. I urge the Court to authorize the requested increase to help fund this important work.

Sincerely,

Nicole J. Renouard
Executive Director
Centro Legal