



An Equal Opportunity Employer

January 9, 2023

House State and Local Government Finance
and Policy Committee
State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

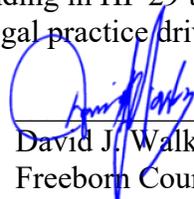
Dear Representative Klevorn,

I address this letter to you as Chair of the House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee regarding the January 17, 2023 committee meeting which will address a bill appropriating money to the Office of the Attorney General (HF 29). I would like to share with you my perspective and to move you with my plea for help. As the Freeborn County Attorney, I know first hand that our county has benefitted from Minnesota's excellent Attorney General's Office, and I support an increase in funding for the AG to enhance service to rural counties.

The Freeborn County Attorney Office is a small office of only 5 attorneys. We have been short-staffed for a year and only filled our final vacancy last month despite our continuous advertising and recruiting efforts. Our 5 current attorneys have a cumulative professional experience of over 80 years in the office, and we handle everything from mental health commitments, guardianships, and child protection to the gamut of adult prosecutions from speeding tickets to murder. We relish the variety of our legal practice and welcome the challenge, but when we encounter a once-in-a-decade murder case, a sexual psychopathic personality in need of civil commitment, or a complex appeal, we can readily become overwhelmed by the specialized legal expertise required for competent and effective action.

We don't reach out to the AG's office every week or every month, but when we do reach out, it's because we desperately need assistance to function. The AG is currently assisting our office in two complex cases that would be straining us beyond the breaking point without their help: an attempted murder case involving three victims including a local policeman who were shot by the defendant seemingly randomly from his apartment window, and a sexual psychopathic personality commitment that requires expertise that we just can't maintain given the frequency with which we face these kinds of challenges.

We need the AG and I strongly support the funding in HF 29 to ensure that we have their assistance when the challenges of our varied legal practice drive us to the brink.



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