

Plainfield Probate Court

PLAINFIELD · CENTRAL VILLAGE · MOOSUP · WAUREGAN · STERLING · CANTERBURY

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HON. KATHLEEN SENDLEY BARRY, JUDGE
MICHELLE R. GUNN, CLERK

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PROBATE COURT ADM
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July 30, 2010

Budget Committee
Hon. Paul J. Knierim, Chairman
188 Newington Road
West Hartford, CT 06810

Dear Judge Knierim:

We would like to request reconsideration of the staffing number assigned to the Plainfield Killingly Regional Probate Court, District 27. We are requesting this reconsideration on the basis of actual work load.

Weighted work load reflects work that has been done, not work that needs to be done. Both the Killingly and Plainfield Probate Courts are currently understaffed. There are four convalescent homes, ten senior housing complexes and several group homes along with both long and short term shelters for battered women and their children as well as a house for wayward girls. Combined, we have over two hundred open decedents estates, 160 conservatorships, 80 guardian of the estate, 61 trusts and 159 GMR cases. Although each court has maintained these files as individual courts, it has been a constant struggle to keep them current and many of them fall out of compliance simply because of the time constraints on the clerks to follow up on delinquent reports and accountings.

In addition, both court clerks currently work overtime to complete the laser fiche of files. Since overtime will not be allowed under the new budget system, this will require a significant amount of time during the regular work week to keep the recording from getting backlogged. When added to the regular daily work load, these tasks alone make 2.3 clerks completely inadequate.

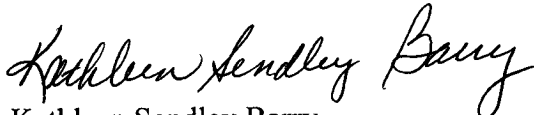
Previously, both courts hired temporary help to deal with the backlog of cases needing follow up as well as laser fiche work. This was effective for a time, but unless these files receive constant attention, the backlog becomes an inevitable problem.

Phone calls, foot traffic and passports account for another large block of staff time. None of these get points under the weighted workload system. Currently both individual courts have used "closed" office hours to enable the clerks to work on files without interruption from the public. Under the new court system, courts are required to be open to the public for the full 40 hours and, therefore, this uninterrupted time is no longer an option for completing necessary work.

In light of these factors, we would like to request three full time staff positions: Chief Clerk I and Clerk as granted and an additional full time assistant clerk. We would like an opportunity to answer any questions at the next Budget Committee meeting. We request an opportunity to be heard and are asking to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Your consideration of our request is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


Kathleen Sendley Barry


David Griffiths

Cc: Hon. Diane E. Yamin, Hon. Joseph D. Marino