

RESOLUTION
ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Katherine Luster
INITIATED BY

Human Services Board
SUBMITTED BY



Katherine Luster
DRAFTED BY

October 2, 2018
DATE DRAFTED

**Requesting Increased Funding and Oversight Reforms for
Wisconsin's Child Protective Services System**

1 **WHEREAS**, the Wisconsin child welfare system is county-operated and state-supervised, except
2 Milwaukee County, where the system is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Children and
3 Families (DCF), Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS); and,
4

5 **WHEREAS**, DCF provides insufficient funding to counties for the provision of child abuse and
6 neglect services including prevention, investigation, treatment, and out-of-home placement costs,
7 though the state has primary responsibility for compliance with federal requirements and shares
8 liability for ensuring the system is meeting its obligations to children and families in all 72 counties;
9 and,
10

11 **WHEREAS**, in recent years the state of Wisconsin added numerous mandates and practice
12 expectations which increased county child protective services (CPS) workload and costs; and,
13

14 **WHEREAS**, the opioid and methamphetamine epidemics have brought Wisconsin's child welfare
15 system to a point of crisis, with increasing concern about the system's ability to meet its obligations to
16 children and families; and,
17

18 **WHEREAS**, the capacity for counties to continue to bear the lion's share of financial responsibility to
19 address this crisis has been exhausted, as rising county contributions to the CPS system have far
20 outpaced increases to the DCF Children and Family Aids allocation and counties have used reserve
21 funding to cover CPS expenses and increase staffing; and,
22

23 **WHEREAS**, Rock County's county contribution for CPS services increased by seventy percent from
24 2012 to 2017 (\$5.2 to \$8.8 million); and,
25

26 **WHEREAS**, Rock County's DCF Children and Family Aids allocation increased by thirteen percent
27 from 2012 to 2018 (\$2.76 to \$3.12 million); and,
28

29 **WHEREAS**, maintaining sufficient resources for Wisconsin's child welfare system is critical to secure
30 the safety and future of our most vulnerable children; and,
31

32 **WHEREAS**, without a proportional increase in the DCF Children and Family Services allocation, the
33 CPS system has been stressed for over a decade, causing caseloads for CPS workers to grow to
34 unreasonable levels, contributing to high levels of staff turnover in some counties and an overrun of
35 out-of-home care costs above what counties can sustain within available resources; and,
36

37 **WHEREAS**, in Rock County the average daily census of children in a foster care placement was 80 in
38 2012 and 154 in 2017; and,
39

40 **WHEREAS**, Wisconsin's CPS system leaves significant gaps in state-level oversight for all counties
41 except Milwaukee County, including the absence of caseload standards, no process for regular
42 legislative evaluation and prioritization of CPS needs and the absence of a legislative committee that
43 provides regular policy guidance concerning CPS system issues such as adequate funding,
44 performance, cost sharing and long-term stability; and,

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Requesting Increased Funding and Oversight Reforms for Wisconsin's Child Protective Services System

Page 2

45 **WHEREAS**, along with DMCPs, all eleven of Wisconsin's peer states with county-administered CPS
46 systems have either adopted caseload standards for CPS caseworkers, completed thorough workload
47 studies as a basis of determining funding needs, or otherwise have made significant recommendations
48 related to keeping CPS workloads manageable; and,

49
50 **WHEREAS**, the children within Wisconsin's CPS system are too important to allow the current level
51 of under resourcing, oversight gaps and, disparity of attention, while shifting the burden to property
52 taxpayers.


53
54 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly
55 assembled this 11th day of October, 2018, does hereby request that the state of Wisconsin
56 increase the Children and Family Aids Allocation to counties in the 2019-21 state biennial budget by
57 \$30 million annually in order to cover a greater share of out-of-home care costs and increase staffing
58 levels based on the caseload standards developed by the Wisconsin County Human Services
59 Association (WCHSA) so Wisconsin's CPS system can meet its obligations; and,

60
61 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Wisconsin Counties Association urges the state of
62 Wisconsin to close critical oversight gaps by creating legislative mechanisms to review the CPS
63 resource needs of all counties as part of the biennial budget process and ensure an appropriate
64 committee provide ongoing policy guidance to respond to emerging CPS trends and ongoing system
65 needs; and,

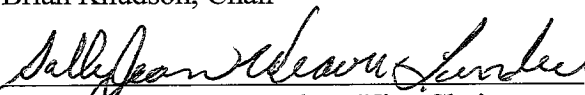
66
67 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to Governor Scott Walker,
68 Department of Children and Families Secretary Eloise Anderson, Department of Administration
69 Secretary Ellen Nowak, area legislators, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Respectfully submitted,

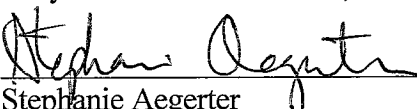
HUMAN SERVICES BOARD



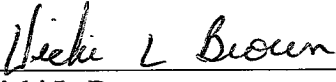
Brian Knudson, Chair



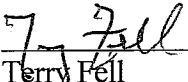
Sally Jean Weaver-Landers, Vice Chair



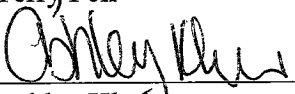
Stephanie Aegerter



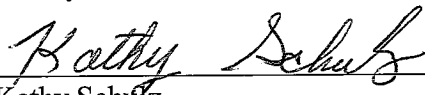
Vicki L. Brown



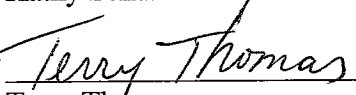
Terry Fell



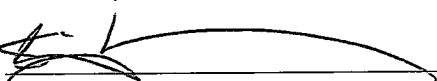
Ashley Kleven



Kathy Schufz




Terry Thomas

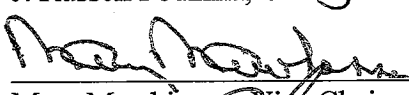


Shirley Williams

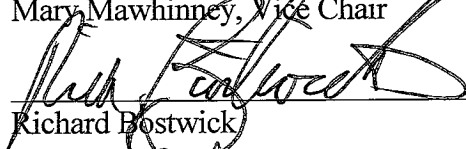
COUNTY BOARD STAFF COMMITTEE




J. Russell Podzilni, Chair



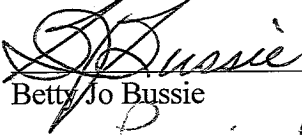
Mary Mawhinney, Vice Chair



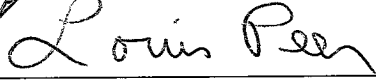
Richard Bostwick



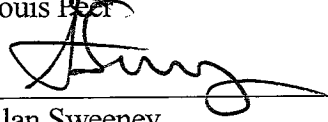
Hank Brill



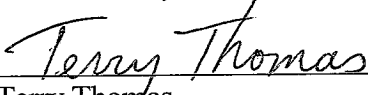
Betty Jo Bussie




Louis Peer



Alan Sweeney



Terry Thomas



Bob Yeomans

Requesting Increased Funding and Oversight Reforms for Wisconsin's Child Protective Services System

Page 3

FISCAL NOTE:

This resolution is advisory only and has no direct fiscal impact on Rock County operations in and by itself.



Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

Advisory only.



Richard Greenlee
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Recommended.



Josh Smith
County Administrator

Executive Summary

Requesting Increased Funding and Oversight Reforms for Wisconsin's Child Protective Services System

The Child Welfare System across Wisconsin has reached a point of crisis with significant increases in the volume of children and families receiving services and increasing complexity of the needs of these families. Statewide, the number of children placed in out of home care has increased dramatically in recent years. In Rock County, the average daily census of children in a child welfare foster care placement has grown from an average daily census of 80 in 2012, to 154 in 2017.

As needs have escalated, Counties have carried the fiscal burden while state aid has failed to keep up with the increasing costs. Since 2012, Rock County's local contributions to child welfare have increased by 70%, while our state allocation has increased by only 13%.

Caseloads for child welfare workers have reached untenable levels and, unlike other county run child welfare systems across the nation, the state of Wisconsin has failed to adopt formal caseload standards or recommendations to assure that adequate care can be provided to keep children safe.

This resolution requests that the State of Wisconsin increase the Children and Families Aids Allocation by 30 million dollars annually in the 2019-2021 biennial budget and advocates that formal legislative oversight mechanisms be established to assure appropriate policies and adequate resources are in place to support the Child Welfare System needs in every county.