

Capital University

1903
Law School

November 19, 2015



Family Advocacy Clinic
Funded by The Center for Family Safety and Healing

Administrative Judge Kim A. Browne
Franklin County Court of Common Pleas
Division of Domestic Relations and Juvenile Branch
373 S. High Street, 6th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Honorable Judge Browne:

Capital University's General Litigation Clinic and Family Advocacy Clinic are pleased to offer this letter of support for the Court's proposal to increase the number of Judges on the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations and Juvenile Branch Bench. As you know we work in close partnership with your court, specifically, with regards to our assistance to the Pro Se clerks with screening and processing of Civil Protection Orders, and with regards to our legal representation in these cases and contested custody cases for victims of domestic violence. Our General Litigation Clinic, too, represents numerous clients in your court. Additionally, Capital University is in contract with your court to staff, train, and oversee the operations of the Self Represented Resource Center. We have seen first-hand and up-close the steady rise in the number of cases filed and pending in Domestic Relations/Juvenile court.

Commencing in July 2011, stemming from a dramatic increase in self represented parties, Capital University, in collaboration with the Court, began servicing self-represented litigants through The Self Represented Resource Center. The Center is housed in the courthouse, is paid for by the Court and is staffed by Capital University employees (2 attorneys and an intern). The Center has helped thousands of pro se litigants, in both domestic and juvenile matters, and has experienced a dramatic increase in parties seeking to use the Center, which, of course, further increases the judges' dockets. Also, the number of civil protection order cases continues to rise each year; in 2014 there were approximately 2200 petitions filed.

The Franklin County courts serve a widely diverse population including urban and suburban demographics, as well as an ever-increasing English as a second language population. We have witnessed the increase in juvenile custody filings, interpreter requests, civil protection orders, and can attest to the dramatic increase in Pro Se litigation – all of which consume numerous court resources and much time.

Your court could benefit from additional judges in several ways: sooner hearing dates in all matters, less congested dockets on a daily basis, duty matters would be further divided thereby decreasing the number of civil protection order cases and other "emergency" matters that are superimposed on the regular dockets, and, the possibility/feasibility of additional special dockets, if desired. We know that additional judgeships will fill a need for the population served by the Domestic Relations/Juvenile Court and by our clinics.

Sincerely,

Danny Bank
Lorie McCaughan
Co- Directors, Capital University Family Advocacy Clinic and
Capital University General Litigation Clinic