



December 1, 2015

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

Honorable Judge Browne:

Franklin County Children Services is 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.

Franklin County has and is still experiencing population growth and there has been no corresponding increase in judgeships. Currently there are 242,453 citizens in Franklin County per judge (domestic and juvenile combined) compared to Cuyahoga with 114,832 citizens per judge (domestic and juvenile combined) and Hamilton County with 160,904 per judge (domestic and juvenile combined). It is easy to see that the families of Franklin County require more judges to serve their needs.

One area that an increase in judgeships that is critical to our agency and the families we serve is Permanent Custody cases. Due to judicial shortages and time constraints, many of these cases are assigned to Visiting Judges when it would be preferable if these cases were heard by the elected official, who has been assigned the case from its' inception. The length of time it takes to complete these cases is contrary to the best interest of the children involved and delays permanency for the most vulnerable children served by our agency and the court. Many times the cases take months, if not years to resolve. It is not uncommon for trials to stretch over many months, once begun. The length of time it takes is a disservice to all parties on these cases and additional judges who are willing to hear these types of cases would be beneficial to all parties to a case.

Franklin County serves a widely diverse population including urban and suburban demographics, as well as a large English as a second language population. We know that additional judgeships will fill a need for the population we both serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chip Spinning".

Chip Spinning, Executive Director  
Franklin County Children Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne O'Leary".

Anne O'Leary, Chief Legal Counsel  
Franklin County Children Services

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"Protecting Children by Strengthening Families"



Commissioner Marilyn Brown • Commissioner Paula Brooks • Commissioner John O'Grady  
President

**Child Support Enforcement Agency**

Susan A. Brown, Director

December 7, 2015

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

Honorable Judge Browne:

Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency is 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 and there are currently three Magistrates assigned to a CSEA docket.

Franklin County has and is still experiencing population growth and there has been no corresponding increase in judgeships. Currently there are 242,453 citizens in Franklin County per judge (domestic and juvenile combined) compared to Cuyahoga with 114,832 citizens per judge (domestic and juvenile combined) and Hamilton County with 160,904 per judge (domestic and juvenile combined). It is easy to see that the families of Franklin County require more judges to serve their needs.

The Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency Staff Attorneys have court hearings on a daily basis. Most of our hearings take place before our three dedicated Magistrates; however, the Judges hear our bond hearings, Motions to Enforce Jail Sentence and review hearings resulting from contempt of court findings that could lead to jail time for non-payment of support. The addition of two judgeships would allow us to obtain earlier court dates for these hearings by creating additional docket space. Currently, each judge hears our Agency cases one morning per week. Ours are not the only cases heard on these dockets, so hearing space is limited and continuances may not be able to be scheduled as quickly as would be beneficial.

In July of 2014, the Court and the Agency entered into a project entitled the Compass Program. Judge Jamison and the Agency agreed to set a separate afternoon docket, once per month, to assist child support obligors with obtaining skills and employment to avoid enforcement of suspended jail sentences resulting from contempt findings. We have been conducting this program for over one year with the assistance of Judge Jamison and several community partners, including Godman Guild, Jewish Family Services and Goodwill. We have seen that this program has been a valuable tool to assist child support obligors to become employed and begin to pay their support obligations rather than enforcing suspended

jail sentences. If there were additional judges on the bench in Franklin County, it could open avenues to even more creative solutions to assist in resolving the problem of non-payment of support. The Agency is interested in working in conjunction with the court to find positive methods of motivating child support obligors to become involved in the lives of their children.

Franklin County serves a widely diverse population including urban and suburban demographics, as well as a large English as a second language population. We have witnessed the increase in interpreter requests, and can attest to the dramatic increase in Pro Se litigation. We know that additional judgeships will fill a need for the populations we both serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan Brown".

Susan Brown, Director  
Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency