



Adams County Children Services  
Wilson Children's Home

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October 19, 2023

The Honorable Representative Pizzulli  
77 South High Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Representative Pizzulli,

The Adams County Children Services Board is writing today to express our support for emergency appointment of an additional Judge in Adams County for the Juvenile and Probate divisions. Over the last 5 years, our agency has continued to see an increase of total cases and number of children served, by our ongoing unit from 119 cases and 179 children served in 2017, to 200 cases and 318 children served in 2022. While there are many factors that have caused those number to increase, the cases we open are taking longer to close, and objections of the Magistrates decision of Permanent Custody can take up to a year to be heard by the Judge. These factors can result in longer placements in Foster Care and postpone permanency further.

Another major adversity our Agency is currently facing is financial strain due to the increase in Foster Care Costs. Adams County has many children with behaviors and situations in which they need specialized care, and that specialized care comes at a higher price than a Kinship placement or traditional foster care. In 2017, our agency paid \$763,376.03 in Foster Care Costs and last year, in 2022, our agency paid \$2,724,669.30 in Foster Care Costs which is 257% increase over a five-year period. We are at a point where we need to be earning revenue in every way possible if we are going to continue to provide all the services the children and families of Adams County need, and the emergency appointment of an additional Judge could help alleviate some of the workload from the current Adams County Court Staff, who is also handling a high volume of cases. With this increase in volume of cases caseworkers sit in the hall of the courthouse for sometimes hours waiting on hearings to be held.

A type of reimbursement our Agency receives is IV-E. This reimbursement is provided for children that meet certain criteria (reasonable efforts by the agency and best interest of the child to be in Agency custody indicated in court documentation, income, deprivation, placement, etc.) and can make placement costs for the child reimbursable by up to 58%. These reimbursements can positively affect our board care costs, so it is very important for our Agency that annual review hearings on IV-E eligible youth are completed on time. Unfortunately, due to the increased number of cases our Agency and the court is handling, there have been instances, particularly on children in Permanent Custody, where these reviews

have not been heard timely which negatively impacts our IV-E eligibility and funding. We believe that the appointment of another Judge could help us, and the Adams County Courts, ensure that these cases are heard in a timely fashion.

If you look the data, it is simple. Adams County has a population of around 27,000 people and in January of 2023, Adams County Children Services had 192 children in custody. Clermont County has a population of around 207,000 and in January of 2023 had 199 children in custody, while Pike County, with a population of around 27,000, had 22 children in custody. Adams County Courts are seeing as many Child Protective Services cases as a neighboring county with a population six times larger and less judicial staff to offset the workload that comes with hearing all of those cases.

We thank you for taking the time to read this letter and hope we have expressed how beneficial it would be to the children and families of Adams County to appoint an additional Judge to the Adams County Court.

Sincerely,

*Hannum Taylor*

Hannum Taylor  
Board Chairperson

*Tena Nickell*

Tena Nickell  
Vice Chairperson

*Stephanie Edgington*

Stephanie Edgington  
Secretary

*Dane Clark*

Dane Clark  
Member

*Karl Boerger*

Karl Boerger  
Member