



October 31, 2022

Honorable Senator Terry Rice, Co-Chair
Honorable Representative Jeff Wardlaw, Co-Chair
Arkansas Legislative Council/Joint Budget Committee
One Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Senator Rice and Representative Wardlaw:

Earlier this year, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) submitted its biennial budget request to the Department of Finance and Administration. I wanted to share with you some details about our request.

Fiscal responsibility and sound financial management are cornerstones of the AOC. The Arkansas Judiciary plays a critical role in maintaining civil society by providing fair and impartial courts to ensure justice, enforce the rule of law, and administer forums for citizens to settle legal disputes peacefully. Our courts fulfill these essential obligations at low cost to the taxpayer by accounting for less than one percent of the State budget.

With this mindset and continued commitment to fiscal responsibility, the AOC requests a few modest adjustments to the biennial budget. These requests are financially prudent and lead to a more efficient administration of justice.

1. With a growing need and demand for court interpreter services, the AOC is requesting one new position: a Spanish language interpreter who will be stationed in Northwest Arkansas. The Hispanic population in Arkansas has grown by 38 percent with a concentration in Northwest Arkansas. By adding a full-time Spanish language interpreter, the AOC will be able to meet its constitutional requirements and will save taxpayer dollars that otherwise would have to spent travel, lodging, and fees for expensive, out-of-state contracting interpreters. The position will be grade GS08, class code Q081C, and titled AOC Spanish Interpreter.
2. Due to a clerical error, the biennial budget request lacks a capital outlay appropriation. The AOC is requesting that present funding be maintained in the amount of \$164,500 to Fund Center 343 and \$801,590 to Fund Center 816.
3. The Attorney General awarded \$1,000,000 to provide additional funding for Arkansas's adult drug court program. These funds derive from multibillion dollar settlements related to the opioid epidemic. The AOC is requesting an appropriation of \$1,000,000 to a new fund center. This request will not require additional funding from the General Assembly.

This request will be a cash appropriation. No new positions will be created from these funds.

With these adjustments, the Arkansas Judiciary and AOC will continue to serve the people of Arkansas with respect, efficiency, and as good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. As always, please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns. I appreciate your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marty Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Marty Sullivan

Cc: Governor Asa Hutchinson
President Pro Tempore Senator Jimmy Hickey, Jr.
Speaker of the House Representative Matthew Shepherd
Chief Justice John Dan Kemp