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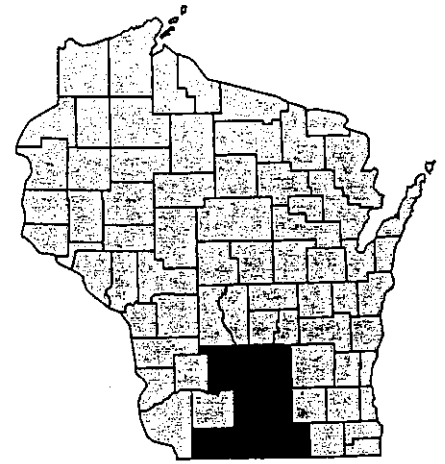
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STATE OF WISCONSIN

FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

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October 8, 2025

RE: Position Eliminations in the Clerk of Courts Office

Dear Chair Andrae and Members of the Public Protection & Judiciary Committee:

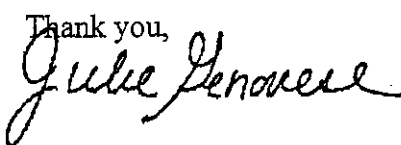
I write this letter to ask that Clerk III positions for our two branches not be frozen or eliminated. The Clerk III position is an essential position for the running of our branch, fielding phone calls, meeting with litigants, processing filings, and covering court. While I recognize these are challenging budgetary times, the elimination of these positions will adversely affect access to justice in my branch and throughout Dane County.

At any given point in time, our 17 branches are operating at about 70% capacity for staff when considering FMLA leave, sick leave, and other county benefits. Our staff is already stretched when covering other branches and even changes in a single clerk's availability make a noticeable impact on our ability to work. Reducing that coverage even further will create significant gaps and delays that will add additional costs for our court and for people using our justice system.

Within my branch alone, I have 110 criminal cases remaining that require jury trials. I am also now drawing civil cases with voluminous filings involving complex constitutional and political questions. In addition, I serve as Chief Judge for the Fifth Judicial District requiring me to respond frequently to correspondence from members of the public regarding cases before our 17 judges and 16 more judges in five other counties.

Further, the courthouse has been operating in a fiscally responsible manner. Our Clerk of Court, Jeff Okazaki, has been working very hard to alleviate the budgetary pressure on the county by finding cost savings and in obtaining significant new revenue from the state.

To be one of the only judges without a Clerk III judicial assistant would impose a very difficult burden on me, my staff, and the entire court system. I know the same is true for our Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division, and for all of the judges and the equally important cases they oversee. Therefore, I respectfully request that these positions remain in their current form and be exempted from elimination.

Thank you,


Julie Genovese
Circuit Judge, Branch 13
Chief Judge, District 5

COLUMBIA | DANE | GREEN | LAFAYETTE | ROCK | SAUK