


MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Special Committee on High-Risk Juvenile Offenders

FROM: Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf, Senior Legislative Associate 

DATE: October 20, 2008

SUBJECT: WLC Bill Drafts for Consideration on October 21, 2008

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) would like to make some brief comments on a few of the bill drafts available for discussion on October 21, 2008. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our comments.

WLC: 0044/1: Assessment of Waiver Criteria

WLC: 0044/1 adds a statutory provision requiring the court to designate a psychiatrist or psychologist, or another expert appointed by the court, to examine a juvenile and submit a report assessing a juvenile's physical, psychological, mental or developmental condition; alcohol or other drug abuse problems; and maturity, when a petition is filed to waive a juvenile to adult criminal court.

WCA has concerns about the costs associated with the filing of the report. We are assuming the cost of the time of the psychiatrist or psychologist, which is "expensive time", will be funded by either county human services departments or the clerks of circuit court. Unfortunately, county budgets do not have the capacity to absorb these additional costs. In these tight fiscal times (levy limits), counties cannot afford to take on additional costs. If the committee moves forward with the recommendation, WCA respectfully requests the allocation of funds to the Director of State Courts to pay for all costs associated with the court report.

WLC: 0143/1 and WLC: 0183/1: Juvenile Correctional Costs

WCA supports both WLC: 0143/1 and WLC: 0183/1. The bills drafts, in essence, reduce county funding associated with the placement of juveniles in juvenile correctional institutions (JCI). Although not currently required in statute, the 2007-2009 state biennial budget bill did provide funding to counties to offset the increase in JCI rates. Absent that

increase, the financial hit to property taxpayers would have been approximately \$23 million over the biennium.

While we fully appreciate the funding provided in the 2007-2009 biennial budget and fully support WLC: 0183/1, we would be remiss if we did not discuss the funding needs of the tens of thousands of juveniles receiving services in the community every day from county human/social services departments. Juveniles in the JCI's represent just a small percentage of the juveniles served every year by counties. It is our hope that this committee will consider at a future meeting recommendations for funding services provided in the community to juveniles found delinquent in the court system.

Thank you once again for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact the WCA office if we can provide the committee with additional information.
