



**DANE COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ISMAEL R. OZANNE**



October 31, 2017

Joe Parisi
County Executive
City-County Building Rm 421
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd
Madison, WI 53703

Dear County Executive Parisi:

I would like to address several points raised in your letter of October 30, 2017. The decision to make an announcement regarding inadequate prosecutor staff was not made hastily. Our management team agreed that we had no alternative but to triage our charging decisions. Dane County police chiefs and the Sheriff have all recognized the impossibility of meeting the demanding needs of increased serious crime with insufficient numbers of prosecutors, most with little experience. The volume and severity of crimes in 2017 are not the same as those experienced in 1986. I had no intention of scaring the public, but they have a right to know about the gravity of the problem, our attempts to gain funding from the State and the County and to be informed of our necessary decision regarding case prosecution priorities.

Of course, we recognize the State's failure to meet its responsibility in funding to increase prosecutor positions. On Wisconsin District Attorneys Association (WDAA) Lobby Day March 8, 2017, I personally met individually with Representatives or staff of Don Vruwink, Dave Considine, Chris Taylor, Peter Barca, Joel Kleefisch, Teresa Berceau, Jimmy Anderson, John Jagler, Dianne Hesselbein, Lisa Subeck, Keith Ripp, Gary Hebl, Melissa Sargent and Sondy Pope and Senators John Erpenbach, Janis Ringhand, Mark Miller, and Fred Risser. A copy of my Lobby Day schedule is attached with this letter. On behalf of the Association we lobbied for Full Funding of Pay Progression for Prosecutors in hopes of stemming the statewide tide of prosecutor turnover and for the establishment of an independent Prosecutor Board that would oversee and set policies for a State Prosecutor's Office. WDAA's position was that the board *would* advocate for funding for new positions *unlike* the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). While those were the official positions of the WDAA, I spoke with every legislator about the critical need for State funding for prosecutors. Attached is a fact sheet I presented to each legislator comparing prosecutor salaries with those of other government, as well as private practice attorneys. I also presented them with Dane County statistics, our DOA HAM (Hiring Above Minimum) Request, DA Workload Analysis and the 2017-2019 State Budget Request which included funding for 12 additional assistant district attorneys.

Our request to the County was made in recognition that this state legislature and state administration have no intention of addressing this problem affecting most counties in

Wisconsin. Our appeal was made based on the actions of other county boards including Brown, Eau Claire and Ozaukee Counties.

We will continue to identify ways of addressing the most serious cases, keeping staff from being demoralized, exploring protocols to increase case diversions, when appropriate, and helping to keep the community safe.

The generous support of our office during your administration is valued and we look to your continued partnership in facing this crisis.

Sincerely,



Ismael Ozanne
Dane County District Attorney

cc: Dane County Board of Supervisors
Sheriff Dave Mahoney
Dane County Chief of Police Association
Dane County Commission on Sensitive Crimes

Attachments:

WDAA Lobby Day handout
Dane County Statistics for Lobby Day
Dane County District Attorney HAM request to DOA
DA Workload Analysis
Dane County District Attorney 2017-2019 State Budget Request for Attorneys
Calendar of meetings with Legislators dated March 8, 2017