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To The Attention of: The Interim Study Committee On Courts And The Judiciary  
Representative Jerry Torr, Chair; and Senator Liz Brown, Vice Chair

I have worked as a Public Defender in the Vigo County Juvenile Court for well over 20 years. In the last few years, the tremendous increase in the court's caseload and responsibilities, have resulted in a backlog of cases that has made the situation very nearly untenable. This court regularly runs several hours past the normal closing time of other courts, and due to the size of the docket, we frequently cannot finish the daily caseload, and many cases must be continued to different dates, which further increases the backlog.

This situation has also greatly increased the job responsibilities of all staff members involved with this court. The morale of the employees has fallen so dramatically, that many long time employees have quit their jobs in the last year, due to the pressure of having to handle such an increase in cases and responsibilities. Every Public Defender colleague of mine, assigned to this court, have quit their jobs in the last year (with the exception of me), due to an unmanageable amount of cases.

Clients are often forced to wait 4 to 5 hours (and sometimes more) past their scheduled court times, for their cases to be called, and it is difficult to explain to them how this could happen. There are often 30 or more cases on our docket, on Tuesday alone, and not enough work hours in the day to give these cases the full amount of attention they deserve.

I believe that I can speak for nearly every one of my fellow employees, in saying that we agree, that there must be an additional court created to handle the overload of cases. Without an additional court being created, I do not believe that this overload situation can ever be remedied.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter



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Jeffrey S Kohr, Attorney At Law