

Attached please find a copy of the **Testimony of the Office of Indigent Legal Services** that Joe Wierschem and I submitted for yesterday's Joint Legislative Hearing on the FY 2018-2019 Public Protection Budget.

In my oral testimony, I focused upon three specific issues:

1. I praised the Executive Budget for its full funding of another year of *Hurrell-Harring* implementation, and its full funding of year one of the statewide expansion of those reforms. I urged legislative support for the Executive Budget in these respects, and I expressed our appreciation not only to the Governor and legislative leaders, but also to the local officials and mandated representation providers, the State Bar Association (NYSBA), the State Association of Counties (NYSAC), NYSDA and CDANY for their hard work in reforming and improving public criminal defense throughout New York.
2. I contrasted the thoughtful and state-funded criminal defense reforms with the continuing neglect of equally mandated Parental Representation in the Family Court. I urged the Legislature to add the \$3 million that we requested for Aid to Localities for the support and improvement of parental representation throughout New York. I described the strong interest of the Judiciary in this issue, under the leadership of Chief Judge DiFiore, Chief Administrative Judge Marks and the Family Court judges, and the energetic activity of the NYSBA Committee on Families and the Law. I expressed the hope that 2018 would be the year in which this long-neglected area of mandated representation would finally generate the state support which it so urgently requires and deserves.
3. I asked the Legislature to fund adequately Aid to Defense, the Indigent Parolee Program, the Prisoners' Legal Services of New York, and NYSDA. In particular, I highlighted the critical support that NYSDA furnishes to providers of mandated representation in every locality, describing it as a vital part of the foundation upon which we are building statewide reform. I specifically urged the Legislature to restore full funding for NYSDA, so it may continue its essential work.

When the livestream of the hearing is available, we will post it on our website. It is about 15 minutes in length, and might be worth a listen.

Best wishes,

Bill