

Public Policy Position SB 514

The Children's Law Section is a voluntary membership section of the State Bar of Michigan, comprised of 474 members. The Children's Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan and the position expressed herein is that of the Children's Law Section only and not the State Bar of Michigan. The State Bar's position on this bill is to be neutral on the bill due to the absence of a fee waiver for indigent parties and parties represented by pro bono counsel in civil matters.

The Children's Law Section has a public policy decision-making body with 19 members. On October 19, 2023, the Section adopted its position after a discussion and vote at a scheduled meeting. 13 members voted in favor of the Section's position, 0 members voted against this position, 0 members abstained, 6 members did not vote.

Support in Part, Oppose in Part, and Recommend Amendment

Explanation

The Children's Law Section Council voted to support the portions of the bill which would raise the per page rate for original transcripts from \$1.75 to \$3.75, create a \$50 minimum charge for an original transcript, and allow for review every 5 years. With no raises in 40 years, the lack of pay for transcriptionists has created a shortage which has negatively impacted litigants in children's law appeals, with long waiting times on cases where permanency and finality are always considerations. Delays in appeals can harm both children and parents as their cases linger without final resolution. To the extent that this bill will help alleviate shortages of transcriptionists and quicken turnaround times, the Council support it.

The Council voted to opposed raising the per page rate for copies. Along those lines, the Council also voted to support an amendment to limit the cost of an electronic copy of a transcript to \$10. Most copies of transcripts are electronic, whether a PDF or Word document, and are sent via email. Increasing the rate for copies when the copy sent requires minimal work beyond the original serves only cost courts and litigants money which could be better used on elsewhere.

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