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*Kendra H. Wilkerson
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August 27, 2018

Via Email

The Honorable Phillip Newsom
President
S.C. Summary Court Judges Association
newsomp@rcgov.us

Dear Judge Newsome:

The House Legislative Oversight Committee's Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Subcommittee is currently performing an oversight study of the S.C. Commission on Indigent Defense (SCCID). The purpose of legislative oversight is to determine if agency laws and programs are being implemented and carried out in accordance with the intent of the General Assembly and whether or not they should be continued, curtailed, or even eliminated. Any House Member may file legislation to implement the Committee's recommendations.

As public input is a cornerstone of the House legislative oversight process, the purpose of this letter is to seek input from your organization about a topic that has been discussed during the study of SCCID. During the study of the agency, it has been brought to the Subcommittee's attention that statutes relating to screening applicants for indigent defense are vague. As a result, the screening process varies from county to county and sometimes even within a county.

Input from your organization on the topics listed below will aid the Subcommittee in its analysis of different options that may provide clarity and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of indigent defense screening.

How are indigent defense applicants screened?

1. Please indicate whether your organization is supportive of a statewide uniform method of screening applicants for indigent defense representation.
2. Please list pros and cons your organization sees and questions your organization has, if any, about the concept.

Who screens indigent defense applicants?

3. Please indicate whether your organization is supportive of the concept of a specific identified position conducting the screening, as opposed to this responsibility varying from county to county, and even within some counties.
4. Please list pros and cons your organization sees and questions your organization has, if any, about the concept.

If your organization would like to provide input, please do so before Tuesday, September 11, 2018. Additionally, the Subcommittee welcomes any other input or feedback your organization would like to provide.

On behalf of the entire Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Subcommittee, we look forward to working collaboratively with your organization and the S.C. Commission on Indigent Defense.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward R. Tallon Sr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edward R. Tallon Sr.
Subcommittee Chair

cc: The Honorable Wm. Weston J. Newton
The Honorable Katherine E. "Katie" Arrington
The Honorable William M. "Bill" Hixon
The Honorable Jeffrey E. "Jeff" Johnson
Mr. Hugh Ryan, Executive Director, S.C. Commission on Indigent Defense
Mr. Dale Butts, Secretary/Treasurer, S.C. Association of Clerks of Court and Registers of Deeds