



Illinois State Association of Counties

August 29, 2022

Statutory Court Fee Task Force
Illinois Supreme Court
222 N. LaSalle Street, 13th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

**Re: Written Comments for August 30, 2022, Public Hearing on the Supreme Court
Statutory Court Fee Task Force Draft Report**

Dear Supreme Court Statutory Court Fee Task Force:

The Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACO) is appreciative for the opportunity to offer comments on the Task Force's *Draft Report on Implementation of 2016 Task Force Recommendations and Additional Proposed Measures for Addressing Barriers to Access to Justice and Excessive Financial Burdens Associated with Fees and Costs in Illinois Court Proceedings*.

A principal concern for ISACO is the increasing financial burdens imposed upon counties for funding the state court system combined with the restriction on local funding options. These funding restrictions coincide with anticipated additional county costs following implementation of the SAFE-T Act.

Increased appropriations by the General Assembly to the Supreme Court to fully reimburse counties for probation costs have been welcome. Unfortunately, most of the funding responsibility for the court systems remains an obligation on Illinois counties. From the *Draft Report*: "For Fiscal Year 2019, the total amount of revenue for the Illinois court system from all sources was approximately \$2.1 billion, as against expenditures of roughly \$2.3 billion. **More than half of that revenue came from counties.** Approximately \$151.6 million, or roughly seven percent (7%) of total revenues, was generated from court assessments."

The financial stress on all counties to fund court operations is likely going to increase following the abolition of cash bail and the reduction in the number of court assessments. As the *Draft Report* suggests, the funding pressure is likely to be felt even more acutely in rural areas with fewer financial resources.

(PAGE 2)

ISACo shares the concerns expressed within the *Draft Report* that “under the current model of funding the expenditures of the court system will likely exceed its total revenue, resulting in underfunding of a co-equal branch and important branch of the State’s government.”

Following the reduction of funding options available for counties to fund courts, ISACo supports a more substantive role for the State to offset this revenue loss. Additional state funding would help ensure that our court system continues to effectively serve the public.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Please feel welcome to contact me at 217/679-3368 or jmccoy@isacoil.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe McCoy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joe McCoy
Executive Director