SAMPLE EMAILS/LETTERS

Email/Letter Asking for Support:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

I am a member of the 18-B/Assigned Counsel Panel in Onondaga County. We are the safety net in criminal courts and Family Court in that we represent the majority of defendants in criminal courts and the litigants in Family Court cases that involve critical constitutionally guaranteed rights. With the changes due to Hurrell-Harring and Raise the Age legislation, the need for lawyers to handle these cases will only increase. We are in a crisis situation in Criminal Courts and Family Courts around the State.

We cannot recruit or replace these attorneys because the statutory rate of compensation has not been increased in 15 years. The current rates have been $60 and $75 since 2004. The rates are insufficient to run a practice that includes rent, insurance costs, staffing, taxes, legal research costs, office overhead and the like. By comparison, federal defenders are currently paid $148 per hour, with an annual cost-of-living adjustment.

We urge you join Judge DiFiore’s call for a statutory rate increase with a COLA provision. We urge you to support the Budget Letters of Assemblyman Lentol and Senator Bailey and the leadership of Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Majority Leader Heastie, Assemblyman Dinowitz (Judiciary), Senator Hoylman (Judiciary), Assemblywoman Weinstein (Finance), and Senator Krueger (Finance), in the effort to assure that all clients in Criminal Court and Family Court will have access to meaningful representation.

Sincerely,

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Sample Email/Letter Thanking for Support:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

I am a member of the 18-B/Assigned Counsel Panel in Onondaga County. I am writing to you to thank you for your support for raising 18-B compensation rates for the first time in 15 years. We join you in the belief that our work is to be valued, and that the shortages of attorneys in criminal courts and family court can best be alleviated by a compensation increase from $60/$75 to $150 with a statutory COLA. We have chosen to do this work out of a desire to help those in need, but we are experiencing a workload crisis in the courts and thank you for recognizing the need to fix this.

Your support will help countless New Yorkers in all matters that have life-long consequences to them and their families.

Sincerely,

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