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Re: Attorney General's Budget and Support for Rural County Attorneys

Dear Committee Members:

The criminal case loads continue to grow in our small counties as they do in our larger counties. Our office just added an attorney to meet the growing civil demands that have been neglected over the past years. We do not have specialization in our small offices. We have to do a little bit of everything. We have a normal heavy criminal case load. Let me illustrate this with how our office is set up for criminal matters. We have one attorney handling our child protection cases which have exploded. She also does the juvenile prosecutions. We have three attorneys with full time criminal loads. Two have additional duties. One attorney handles all levels of criminal cases. One attorney with criminal matters, child support cases, and miscellaneous civil issues. Myself with a full criminal load, civil commitments, and all of the other duties and responsibilities that come with being county attorney. I haven't attended a county board meeting in countless months. We are keeping up the best we can, the demands and cases stack up. Then I get the call. We have a double homicide.

Our small offices will struggle with the time commitment and specialization needed for those most serious criminal matters. When those first and second degree homicides come our way, and there will be more to come, the prosecution help from the Attorney General's Office allows us to keep up with what we deal with day to day. In addition, they have vast experience in these matters and will handle the time consuming appeals. Our small offices need this valuable support to continue. Moreover, we would also welcome prosecution support for other serious complex criminal cases involving criminal

sexual conduct, controlled substances, and fraud. Justice is not compromised in the serious criminal matters when there is time and experience dedicated to them.

We have greatly benefited from the services the Attorney General's Office has provided us over the years. Our office looks forward to their continued support for our most serious criminal cases. Our office urges you to support the Attorney General's Office budget request. Thank you for your attention in this most important matter.

Sincerely,



Charles G. Rasmussen
Todd County Attorney

CGR/smp