

January 5, 2024

Court Interpreter Program
c/o Mr. Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator
State Court Administrator's Office
Court Services Division
25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd, Suite 105
St. Paul, MN 55155

Subject: Letter of Support for Minnesota Court Interpreters

Dear Mr. Jeff Shorba and Court Interpreter Program staff:

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) and the American Translators Association (ATA) extend their unwavering support to the dedicated court interpreters working in Minnesota who are advocating for improved compensation and working conditions. We commend them for their steadfast commitment to facilitating seamless communication in legal proceedings. Interpreters play a pivotal role in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps in the administration of justice, significantly contributing to the integrity and effectiveness of the court system.

Founded in 1978, NAJIT is singular in representing court interpreters, court translators, judicial officers, court administrators, scholars, trainers, as well as interpretation and translation students. ATA was founded in 1959 and represents translators and interpreters working in over 90 languages. Together, we represent nearly 10,000 language professionals nationwide, many of whom work in legal settings. We are united by our commitment to advancing the professional contributions of interpreters and translators in legal settings, nurturing their growth, and advocating for best practices that ensure equal access to justice for communities of speakers with limited English proficiency (LEP). We fully recognize the unique skill set, knowledge, and professionalism that court interpreters bring to their vital work. We firmly believe that compensation for these services should be congruent with the high standards of expertise required.

Understanding the paramount importance of fair compensation, we acknowledge the intricacies of court interpreter work and the continuous investment in professional development to maintain and enhance interpretation skills. Adequate remuneration not only recognizes the value court interpreters bring to the legal process but also serves as a crucial means of attracting and retaining highly qualified professionals, thereby ensuring the continued delivery of professional interpretation services.

NAJIT and ATA stand firmly beside interpreters in advocating for compensation structures that align with the specialized nature of court interpreting. We encourage ongoing and constructive

dialogue between interpreters and court administrators to address these concerns and collaboratively find mutually beneficial solutions. Creating an environment that truly values the indispensable contributions of interpreters is essential to enhancing the overall delivery of justice.

NAJIT and ATA remain resolute in our commitment to supporting the professional interests of court interpreters nationwide, advocating for fair compensation, and highlighting the invaluable role interpreters play in our legal system. We pledge our ongoing support to Minnesota court interpreters' efforts to engage productively with the Minnesota Judiciary. Together, we can contribute significantly to the advancement of the interpreting profession and the ongoing pursuit of justice.

The NAJIT Board of Directors
The ATA Advocacy Committee

Cc:

Representative Jamie Becker-Finn
Hon. Natalie E. Hudson, Chief Justice, Minnesota Supreme Court
Judge David L. Knutson, First Judicial District
Polly Ryan, Program Coordinator, Court Interpreter Program
Governor Tim Walz
Senator Ron Latz