



CIRCUIT COURT BUDGET COMMITTEE

2112 INDUSTRIAL DRIVE
P. O. BOX 104480
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI
65110

JUDGE STEVEN OHMER, CHAIRMAN
JUDGE PATRICIA JOYCE, VICE-CHAIRMAN
JUDGE T. BENNETT BURKEMPER, JR.
JUDGE CHARLES CURLESS
JUDGE GLEN DIETRICH
JUDGE ROBERT KOFFMAN
JUDGE DONALD MCCULLIN

JUDGE MARK POWELL
JUDGE MARCO ROLDAN
JUDGE NANCY SCHNEIDER
JUDGE KEITH SUTHERLAND
JUDGE WILLIAM SYLER
JUDGE BARBARA WALLACE

April 8, 2011

Dear Judges and Juvenile Officers:

I wanted to make you aware as soon as possible of a major change in juvenile detention staffing, as adopted by the Circuit Court Budget Committee (CCBC) at its meeting Friday, April 8. As you will see from the attached report, the **Circuit Court Budget Committee has recommended the elimination of all detention staff from six detention facilities, specifically in the 17th (Johnson County), 18th, 20th, 30th, 32nd and 36th circuits.** While the CCBC realizes that this action is difficult to take, particularly in light of all of the persons whose lives will be affected by losing these positions, we believe that this change is in the best long-term interests of the judiciary as well as the state of Missouri and its citizens. Members of the CCBC detention facilities workgroup visited each affected facility personally and conducted a review of all detention operations in all facilities, including not only staffing and population data but also facility conditions, proximity to other facilities, and the long-term need to provide alternatives to detention at all remaining facilities. This review led the workgroup to conclude that the children served by the facilities proposed for closure could be brought into other facilities within a reasonable distance from their home communities while we continue working toward a better, long-term solution for juvenile detention in Missouri that will be in the best interest of the children these facilities are meant to serve.

I realize this is a great burden on all persons in all counties affected – both on those losing jobs and on those who may well be asked to receive children from facilities that are closing. Therefore, the CCBC intends to provide as much time as possible to prepare for the effects of this change on all involved. **No formal reduction in force will occur before January 1, 2012**, unless the affected facilities and persons determine a prior date is preferable. This will provide time for affected parties to determine many things, including new detention arrangements for the facilities losing staff, the need to increase staff at receiving facilities once such arrangements are made, and additional issues such as funding for transport, tracking and other matters. Most importantly, this transition period will offer the affected employees the maximum time possible to find other work, and the judiciary intends to offer resources to these employees to assist them in their searches as well.

April 8, 2011

This new reality will require a great deal of cooperation and consideration from a variety of persons and parties, to include not only judges, juvenile officers and detention workers but also the affected counties and their governments, stakeholders such as the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association, and eventually the governor and legislature as well.

Decisions of this magnitude are always difficult for the committee. Therefore, we remain open to discussing this matter with you further, should you want to do so. The committee or staff will return to each facility in person to ensure every affected worker has the opportunity to discuss this situation directly with staff and members of the CCBC.

Finally, to those presiding judges in circuits where facilities are to be closed, you are the appointing authority over the affected workers. Thus, you are advised to notify your employees as soon as possible of this decision so that workers have as much notice as possible. I have attached a notification letter that you can use for this purpose, and OSCA staff are also willing to help with the notification process if you should need further support.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven R. Ohmer".

Steven R. Ohmer
Chairman

SRO:glj

Attachment