

PUBLIC COMMENT for AB1058 Fund Allocation Joint Sub-Committee
(Meeting scheduled to be held August 20, 2018)

To: All Joint Sub-Committee members

Unfortunately, I am away this week and unable to submit a more detailed comment by today's deadline, however I would like to submit the following comments via this e-mail. Please excuse any typos, as I am having to do this on my i-phone.

1. The materials contain no definition or explanation of a cluster court, to understand how a court is listed in a particular cluster. and why a co Over the 20-yr. + course of the program, I suspect some courts who may have been considered a medium sized court, for example, are now large courts and vice-versa. Without this understanding, it is difficult to adequately comment on some of the material.
2. It would appear that Model 1 is essentially the same one or very similar to the one that was circulated "For Information Purposes Only" at the beginning of this whole process. I do not believe it would be sustainable for the smaller courts, i.e. to be able to survive and properly service the grant requirements.
3. It is unclear as to what happens in Model 2 after one year. Is the idea to keep going in reductions for all but cluster one courts after year one?
4. I believe it is important to contact the courts to hear directly from them an assessment of what they believe the consequences of these models, and any reductions, would be on the AB1058 Program in their court.
5. It would also be both helpful and prudent to find out if the courts getting the extra money, will be able to use it (or do not really need all of it)...and to balance that against the impact it will have on those with reduced budgets. If courts are not going to utilize the money to, for example, hire the numbers of judicial need that the models have used, then what is the \$ needed for?
6. The problem with all of these models is that they are based on an inadequate assessment of the true workload of an AB1058 court, which is primarily a motion driven practice, with the number of motions and hearings dependent largely upon how well the institutional filer, the local child support agency (LCSAs) conducts their work. I have said this before, and will say it again, that if you take the same 20,000 cases in an AB1058 program, the workload it produces in one county, can be vastly different than in another county. For example, what might happen to those 20,000 cases in Sonoma County - known to be a leader in stats for getting stipulations on a large percentage of their cases early on - is that only half or less need to come to court, and do not return as often (as the parties have what is called a right-sized order) vs. LA County - known in the stats to have a large default rate well over 50% for their cases early on - leading to an initial need only to review large numbers of defaults (no hearings, sometimes for years), which in turn - again sometimes only years later - leads to a higher number of motions on set asides, mods, and enforcement activities (including individuals continually resisting collection when they are unable to set aside the default). Getting folks to understand the unique aspects of this highly individualized program is perhaps one of the most frustrating aspects that I have faced while participating and providing input in this process.

7. I cannot emphasize enough that it is extremely important to give courts adequate time to adjust to whatever Model is adopted, as especially in the smaller courts, reduction in \$ on a grant program can have a much bigger impact.

8. And finally, equally important is the need to have a coordinated and well thought out approach of monitoring the impacts on the grant program from a state wide perspective in terms of the required performance measures that are associated with this grant money.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. These are my individual comments, and not that of any organization.

-Rebecca Wightman
Commissioner
Superior Court, San Francisco



**Child Support
Directors Association**

*A Coalition of Experts Collecting Billions
for California's Children*

Child Support Directors Association

August 16, 2018

Judicial Council of California
AB 1058 Funding Allocation Joint Subcommittee
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via e-mail to: familyjuvenilecomm@jud.ca.gov

RE: Comment to -- Review of Draft Child Support Commissioner Funding Allocation Models, AB 1058 Funding Allocation Joint Subcommittee Meeting, agenda item, August 20, 2018

Dear AB 1058 Funding Allocation Joint Subcommittee members:

I write on behalf of the members of the California Child Support Directors Association (CSDA) to provide comment to the August 20, 2018 Subcommittee Meeting agenda item, which will review draft child support commissioner funding allocation models.

The CSDA was established in 2000 as a non-profit association to represent local child support directors of California's 58 counties. The association strives to be of service to the greater child support infrastructure and its many partners and stakeholders. And we have been interested in the work of this Joint Subcommittee for some time.

We have only in the last 24 hours come to know that the Subcommittee is nearing the final decision making for a revised allocation method. We understand there are three Models being proposed each of which cause funding to be shifted in varying degrees between the several counties. Under the various models, some counties receive additional funding while many others lose funding. In Model 1 it appears the majority of counties stand to lose funding.

CSDA

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While we understand that all state agencies face increasing budget challenges to do more with less financial resources, we also know very well the challenges that inadequate funding introduces into the child support system.

Shifting funds from one county to another may on paper seem a logical and reasonable action. But in the day-to-day work we do assisting families to establish orders, modify existing orders, and working to help paying parents find jobs, we find ourselves very much financially strained. Reducing funding to the majority of courts in such an environment where the other Child Support partners (in this case, the Local Child Support Agencies) do not have the capacity to assist in the workload, will undoubtedly cause disruption to the families we are here to serve.

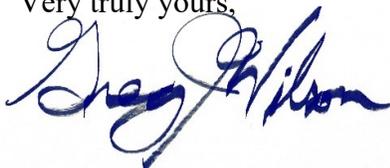
The impact of Model 1 will be a decrease in funding to 43 courts who work with 43 local child support agencies. One of those courts will see a decrease in funding of as much as 91% (this is Mono County, which would move from current funding of \$45,974 to proposed funding of \$4,344). The median loss of funding for counties that would lose funding is 44% and for those same counties the average loss is 43%. These are untenable reductions that would almost certainly result in the reduction services and a failure on some level to provide adequate access to justice.

The approach in reallocating funds taken in Models 2 and 3 would be far more preferred by the Directors and staff of Local Child Support Agencies. We foresee drastic negative unintended consequences arising from an approach such as in Model 1 that reduces funding beyond the ability to hire even a single FTE within certain counties. There are vast economies of scale available to the large and very large counties. Medium-sized and small counties must have some base-line funding in order to merely continue operations.

Again, we understand there are limited resources and we understand that often means hard choices must be made. However, we would urge the Joint Subcommittee adopt a model that minimizes the significant shifts apparent in at least one of these Models. We might also suggest the adoption of a Model that provides a gliding path approach to a final allocation level. If the proposed funding levels in Model 1 for example represents the end funding goals, at least make those changes over some time.

The members of this Association look forward to continuing this discussion with the Subcommittee with the hopes that a reasonable allocation model that gradually eases in changes over time to minimize any unintended negative consequences to our customers and the families we serve.

Very truly yours,



Greg J. Wilson
Executive Director