



THE SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY

County Division – Room 4

232 Russell Street • Hammond, Indiana 46320
(219) 933-2841 • Fax: (219)933-2833

Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic

September 28, 2020

Senator Erin Houchin
Indiana State Capitol Building
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Senators and Representatives of the Committee,

I am seeking legislation be passed approving a Magistrate position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division, Room Four, sitting in Hammond, Lake County, Indiana.

As a new judge, I have the daunting task of understanding and learning not only the legal aspects of the position but also the administrative aspects of running an office. I was appointed in 2019 and had to learn many things on my own as the previous judicial officer vacated the position several months prior to my arrival. This past year has had its challenges but also its rewards.

I have implemented a Driving While Suspended program designed to assist pro se litigants in obtaining their driving privileges. In addition, the Court is utilizing the probation department to place high-risk defendants on a pretrial service program. Further, the probation department is in the planning phase of creating a Problem Solving Drug Court. Finally, the Court is working closely with Warden Michael Zenk in an effort to eliminate prisoner transport by becoming the pilot program in which inmates will be able to electronically view and sign plea agreements. It has been quite a busy year for the Court.

While the Court was in the process of reinventing itself, several other courts were in the process of closing their doors. Beginning in January 2020, cases from Hammond City Court and Whiting City Court were redistributed to Room Four. In addition, the town of New Chicago began filing ordinance violations in Room Four. With the anticipated closing of the Merrillville Town Court, there will be even more cases transferred to Room Four.

I have included several letters of support, poll results from the Lake County Bar Association survey, and the weighted caseload study figures. I hope this information can paint a better picture as to the growing need for this position. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Aleksandra Dimitrijevic
Judge



Office of the Prosecuting Attorney

31st Judicial Circuit
Lake County, Indiana

BERNARD A. CARTER
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

CRIMINAL DIVISION
2293 NORTH MAIN STREET
CROWN POINT, IN 46307
(219) 755-3720
(219) 755-3642 FAX

September 29, 2020

Senator Erin Houchin
Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary
Indiana State Senate
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Senator Houchin:

I am writing to express my whole hearted support for a magistrate's position for the Lake County Division IV Courtroom. As Prosecuting Attorney, I am aware of the critical need for an additional judicial officer based on the increase in filing of criminal and civil cases in the County Division IV Courtroom.

Adding a full time magistrate would better serve attorneys and the general public greatly by granting better access to a courtroom and resolve many of the issues regarding the calendars of the courts. I believe that this would be in the best interest of Lake County judiciary and the citizens of Lake County.

I fully support this endeavor. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Respectfully,

Bernard A. Carter
Lake County Prosecuting Attorney

LAKE COUNTY COUNCIL

LAKE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
2293 NORTH MAIN STREET
CROWN POINT, INDIANA 46307
219-755-3280
FAX: 219-755-3283



LAKE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
CROWN POINT, INDIANA



1ST DISTRICT
DAVID HAMM

July 22, 2020

★
2ND DISTRICT
ALFREDO MENCHACA

Senator Erin Houchin
Indiana State Capitol Building
200 W. Washington St.
Indpls., IN 46204

★
3RD DISTRICT
CHARLIE BROWN

RE: HONORABLE ALEKSANDRA DIMITRIJEVIC
LAKE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT, COUNTY DIVISION,
ROOM IV
MAGISTRATE JUDGE POSITION

★
4TH DISTRICT
DANIEL DERNOLC

Dear Senators & Representatives of the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary:

This letter is in support of a Magistrate Judge position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division IV, in Hammond, Indiana.

★
5TH DISTRICT
CHRISTINE CID

The caseload of Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, newly appointed to the bench in March of 2019, has expanded greatly. Last year the Hammond and Whiting City Courts were in the process of closing and have ceased to exist as of January 1, 2020. Those cases are being filed in her Court at this time along with ordinance violation cases from the Town of New Chicago. She has been meeting with the City and Town administrations of these local governments to develop a process and protocol for a smooth transition to her courtroom.

★
6TH DISTRICT
TED F. BILSKI

Even without the addition of these cases, the caseload in her Court has been expanding steadily. The three other Lake Superior Court, County Division Judges support the addition of a Magistrate for Judge Dimitrijevic. County Courts, Division I, II and III are located in Crown Point in south Lake County, the hub of County government. Judge Dimitrijevic's courtroom is the only Superior Court, County Division, located in north Lake County, in Hammond with both criminal and civil jurisdiction. Providing a Magistrate in her Hammond courtroom would alleviate the burden on her to accommodate a newly burgeoning caseload in north Lake County.

★
7TH DISTRICT
CHRISTIAN JORGENSEN

Judge Dimitrijevic hopes to add a problem-solving court to serve defendants who appear in her court and would benefit from such a program. This concept has proven successful in the Gary City Court and other courts throughout the State of Indiana. She has established the Driving While Suspended Program for indigent defendants and assists them in obtaining a valid license. Judge Dimitrijevic has begun outreach in the community with criminal justice students at the Hammond Area Career Center, and is working to initiate other programs for at-risk students with the North Township Trustee's Office and schools in Hammond and throughout north Lake County.

A judicial Magistrate for County Division IV in north Lake County would provide better, and more timely access to justice for all litigants in Lake County, both criminal and civil, and would enable Judge Dimitrijevic to run an expanded court caseload more effectively and efficiently.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this request to the Committee.

Very truly yours,



TED F. BILSKI
President, Lake County Council

cc: Honorable Aleksandra Dimitrijevic
Lake County Council Members
Lake County Board of Commissioners



THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF LAKE

2293 North Main Street
Crown Point, Indiana 46307
Phone: (219) 755-3200
Fax: (219) 755-3064

Kyle W. Allen, Sr., First District
Jerry Tippy, Second District
Michael C. Repay, Third District

September 22, 2020

Dear Members of the Legislative Committee on Courts and the Judiciary,

On behalf of the Lake County Board of Commissioners, please allow this correspondence to serve as a Letter in Support of the request by Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic to add a judicial Magistrate position for Lake County Superior, County Division Four Court. With the announcements of the closing of the Hammond and Whiting City Courts, and the assignments of New Chicago ordinance violations to her Courtroom having commenced in January of 2020, we fully support her request to add an extra judicial officer.

In addition to the aforementioned cases being assigned to her Court, both the criminal and small claims caseloads have been steadily growing. According to a recent study by Lake County Court Administrator Marty Goldman, weighted caseloads in her courtroom have increased for each of the past three years.

The other three County Division Judges have shared with us that it is crucial for Judge Dimitrijevic to have a Magistrate to help manage these cases. We believe this will enable the judge to better serve the public and administer her court effectively and efficiently.

Judge Dimitrijevic was appointed to the bench in March of this year. In that short period of time, she has worked to reorganize and improve the court and staff by streamlining procedures and protocols. This has helped to enhance its professionalism and ability to serve the litigants who come to her court. Gaining a Magistrate in a timely manner is vital to these efforts, especially given the drastic caseload expansion that began in January of 2020.

Additionally, Judge Dimitrijevic has already instituted a new measure we anticipate will result in cost-savings, by utilizing available technology in her 20-year-old courtroom that has never been used. Two afternoons a week, defendants in the Lake County Jail will now make their initial appearances before her via video conference. This means that sheriff's deputies will no longer spend those days transporting prisoners from Crown Point to Hammond. We anticipate this will result in a significant savings in transportation costs and will greatly reduce overtime hours by the sheriff's deputies.

The Board of Commissioners would like to thank you for your consideration in approving a Magistrate position for Lake County Superior Court, County Division Four. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Michael C. Repay, President
Lake County Board of Commissioners



SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY
Civil Division, Room One

JOHN M. SEDIA, JUDGE

September 29, 2020

232 Russell Street
Hammond, Indiana 46320
Telephone: (219) 933-2890
Fax: (219) 933-0213

Senator Erin Houchin
Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary
Indiana State Senate
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

RE: Magistrate
Lake Superior Court, County Division IV

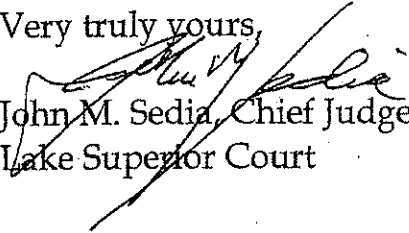
Dear Senator Houchin:

Let this letter serve as an expression of my support for the creation of a magistrate position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division IV.

The closure of the Hammond and Whiting City Courts has resulted in an increase in the number of both existing and newly filed cases in Division IV because of its location in Hammond, Indiana. This increase is more than a judge and two part-time referees can handle without the potential of undue delays in the administration of the cases before the court.

Justice delayed is justice denied. A Magistrate in Division IV will end the potential of undue delay and serve the interests of justice.

Very truly yours,


John M. Sedia, Chief Judge
Lake Superior Court



**LAKE SUPERIOR COURT
COUNTY DIVISION ROOM 1**

2293 North Main Street
Crown Point, Indiana 46307

NICHOLAS J. SCHIRALLI
Judge



Phone (219) 755-3570
Fax (219) 755-3006

9-14-20

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a colleague of Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, and I support her request for a magistrate position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division, Room Four. The caseload of the County Division of the Lake Superior Court is among the largest caseloads in Indiana. With the closures of the Hammond City Court and the Whiting City Court, our caseloads will increase. Room four of the County Division, is the only court within the County Division, that does not have a magistrate. The other Three Rooms of the County Division were each given authority by the State Legislature to appoint a magistrate years ago. In my opinion, a magistrate for Room Four is long overdue.

Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic was appointed to the bench in February 2019. She is a very dedicated and hardworking Judge. However, she is in need of assistance. She is looking for ways to improve the efficiency of her court. Allowing her to appoint a magistrate will provide for better efficiency, and will help to provide speedy justice to the litigants that come before the court. I fully support her request to be able to appoint a magistrate.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nicholas J. Schiralli". Below the signature, the letters "MP" are printed.

Nicholas J. Schiralli
Judge, Lake Superior Court, County Division, Room One



SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY

COUNTY DIVISION - ROOM NO. 2
2293 NORTH MAIN STREET
CROWN POINT, INDIANA 46307
(219) 755-3580

SHEILA M. MOSS, JUDGE

Dear Legislative Committee,

This letter is in support of my colleague, Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, who is requesting and is in need of a Magistrate for her court in Hammond, Lake Superior Court, County Division, Room Four. We other three Superior Court judges have Magistrates to help us deal with the large caseloads we deal with regularly. Such a support position is critical to help each of us not only effectively deal with our caseloads, but also to allow us to effectively administer our courtrooms.

Judge Dimitrijevic's caseload has been growing steadily and in January will become even larger, as her court is set to take on the cases from both Hammond and Whiting City Courts, which have large caseloads, as well as the cases in New Chicago City Court. A caseload study has shown the numbers in her court already have been increasing and will swell greatly once those other courts shut down and are assigned to her court.

I believe it is important to make sure that Judge Dimitrijevic, as a new judge, has the resources to help her succeed and maintain the high standards she has sought to implement since she took the bench earlier this year. The Magistrate position will be crucial in helping her make sure defendants and the public are fairly, efficiently and properly served, and that she and her court are not overwhelmed.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sheila M. Moss", is written over a horizontal line.

Sheila Moss

Judge, Lake Superior Court, County Division, Room Two

**SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY
COUNTY DIVISION III
2293 NORTH MAIN STREET
CROWN POINT, INDIANA 46307
(219) 755-3601**

JULIE N. CANTRELL, JUDGE

October 2, 2019

Dear Legislative Committee Members,

I write in support of the creation of a Magistrate position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division Four. As Senior Judge of the County Division Courts, I am aware of the increase in the case volume in all four County Division Courts. The closing of the Hammond City Court and Whiting City Court, of which many cases will be sent to County Division Four, will greatly increase an already high case load.

Currently, each of the other three County Division Courts operate with two Judicial officers. Additionally, the weighted caseload data supports the addition of a Magistrate position in County Division Four. I respectfully request your consideration in the creation of said position.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Julie N. Cantrell
Senior Judge, County Division



STATE OF INDIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRD FLOOR STATE HOUSE
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204

REPRESENTATIVE CAROLYN JACKSON
200 WEST WASHINGTON STREET
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204

COMMITTEES:
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT REDUCTION, RMM
FAMILY, CHILDREN AND HUMAN AFFAIRS
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

August 17, 2020

Lake County Council
2293 N. Main St.
Crown Point, IN 46307

Dear Council Members:

Thank you for contacting me about creating a Magistrate Judge position for Lake Superior Court, County Division IV to assist Judge Aleksandra Dimirijevic. I think this is a good idea and will do what I can to assist you in this endeavor.

Indiana Code IC2-5-1.3-13(d) contains the list of requirements that you must meet to get this addition to our county court system.

Please keep me informed on how your quest for the Magistrate Judge position for Lake Superior Court, County Division IV is proceeding. If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach my office at (317) 232-9875 or h1@iga.in.gov.

Sincerely,

Carolyn B. Jackson
State Representative
House District #1

Lake County Bar Association County Division IV

Lake County Bar Association

Poll Start	#####
Poll End	#####
Voters	999
Cast ballots	236
Participation	23.6%

Produced by BallotBoxOnline
www.ballotboxonline.com

County Division IV Magistrate

Lake County Superior Court, County Div. IV

Yes	63.6%	150
No	36.4%	86

Lake County Superior Court, County Div. IV

Practice Area

Civil	26.7%	40
Criminal	26.0%	39
Both	32.7%	49
Not answered	14.7%	22

Establishment of Magistrate Position

Yes	82.7%	124
No	13.3%	20
Not answered	4.0%	6

SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

2293 North Main Street
Crown Point, Indiana 46307
219-755-3494
Fax 219-755-3004

Martin Goldman
Court Administrator
Jury Administrator



October 15, 2019

Ethan Hudson
Interim Study Committee on the Courts and Judiciary

Dear Sir:

I am writing in support of the request for full-time Magistrate in the Courtroom of Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, Lake Superior Court, County Division 4 in Hammond, IN.

County Division 4 currently maintains a Judge and a Referee/Court Administrator who is utilized 1.5 days per week or 30% of a full-time judicial officer. As seen in the table below, there is an upward trend in judicial need for this court:

	JUDICIAL NEED	JUDICIAL OFFICERS
2016	1.12	1.30
2017	1.31	1.30
2018	1.44	1.30
2019	1.56 (following 2 nd Q)	1.30

As we prepare to assimilate the tens of thousands of cases from the closing of the Hammond and Whiting City Courts, our County Division courts, especially County Division 4 in Hammond, will see an increase in filings from those attorneys who previously filed in the Hammond and Whiting City Courts. These city court closures are just the first in what we believe will be additional city/town court closures.

It is therefore imperative that additional judicial resources be provided to County Division 4, as they are the only County Division Court in Lake County with fewer than 2 full time judicial officers.

Thank you for your time. If I can be of additional assistance, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Martin Goldman

Martin Goldman
Lake County Court Administrator

Hon. John M. Sedia
Chief Judge

CIVIL DIVISION
Hon. John M. Sedia
Room 1, Hammond
Hon. Calvin D. Hawkins
Room 2, East Chicago
Hon. Thomas P. Hallett
Room 3, Gary
Hon. Kristina C. Kantar
Room 4, Gary
Hon. Stephen E. Scheele
Room 5, Hammond
VACANT
Senior Judge, Room 6, Crown Point
Hon. Bruce D. Parent
Senior Judge, Room 7, Crown Point

COUNTY DIVISION
Hon. Nicholas J. Schiralli
Room 1, Crown Point
Hon. Sheila M. Moss
Room 2, Crown Point
Hon. Julie N. Cantrell
Senior Judge, Room 3, Crown Point
Hon. Aleksandra Dimitrijevic
Room 4, Hammond

CRIMINAL DIVISION
Hon. Salvador Vasquez
Room 1, Crown Point
Hon. Clarence D. Murray
Senior Judge, Room 2, Crown Point
Hon. Diane Boswell
Room 3, Crown Point
Hon. Samuel L. Capps
Room 4, Crown Point

JUVENILE DIVISION
Hon. Thomas P. Stefaniak, Jr.
Senior Judge, Crown Point

☆☆☆☆☆

3000 W. 93rd Avenue
Crown Point, Indiana 46307

15 West 4th Avenue
Gary, Indiana 46402

3711 Main Street
East Chicago, Indiana 46312

232 Russell Street
Hammond, Indiana 46320

MEMO

TO: JUDGE DIMITRIJEVIC

FROM: MARTIN GOLDMAN

I was looking at the stats for 1st and 2nd Q. To determine need accurately (counting only new cases filed before the court), I am not including the transfers in of PL and CC cases from the Hammond City Court.

Based on that, your court has the highest utilization at 1.15.

	County 1	County 2	County 3	County 4
JUD NEED	1.55	1.79	2.05	1.49
JUD OFF	2.0	2.0	2.4	1.3
UTILIZATION	0.78	0.90	0.86	1.15

For reasons I don't understand, you were transferred 6,748 PL cases and 1,563 CC cases from Hammond, while the other 3 courts got only 613 PL and 142 CC cases.

While I didn't count these anomalous cases in the utilization figures, if we did, your judicial need would rise from 1.49 needed to 10.8 needed.

Not sure how we get this across to the legislature but your court just had 8,311 cases added on top of your normal caseload.

Martin Goldman
Lake County Court Administrator
2293 North Main Street
Crown Point, IN 46307
O: 219-755-3494
F: 219-755-3004



STATE OF INDIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRD FLOOR STATE HOUSE
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204

Mike Aylesworth
State Representative
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
h11@iga.in.gov

COMMITTEES
Vice Chair of Environmental Affairs
Local Government
Natural Resources

Lake County Council
2293 North Main Street
Crown Point, Indiana 46307

RE: Magistrate Judge Request

August 6, 2020

Dear Council Members,

Thank you for reaching out to me regarding your request for a Magistrate Judge position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division IV, to assist Judge Aleksandra Dimirijevic. While I do not sit on the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary, I wanted to make you aware of new requirements passed by the General Assembly related to this request.

The General Assembly passed Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 256 – 2020, which outlined requirements for counties that wish to add an additional court or a magistrate. The full list of changes can be found in Indiana Code (IC) 2-5-1.3-13(d). Be sure to include all documentation required by statute in your application. Assuming all requirements are met, I support the creation of an additional magistrate for the Lake Superior Court, County Division IV.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office at (317)-234-9447 or at h11@iga.in.gov if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Mike Aylesworth
State Representative
District 11

REC'D L.C. COUNCIL
20 AUG 10 10:30

LAKE COUNTY COUNCIL

LAKE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
2293 NORTH MAIN STREET
CROWN POINT, INDIANA 46307
219-755-3280
FAX: 219-755-3283



LAKE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
CROWN POINT, INDIANA



1ST DISTRICT
DAVID HAMM

July 22, 2020

★

Senator Erin Houchin
Indiana State Capitol Building
200 W. Washington St.
Indpls., IN 46204

2ND DISTRICT
ALFREDO MENCHACA

★

RE: HONORABLE ALEKSANDRA DIMITRIJEVIC
LAKE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT, COUNTY DIVISION,
ROOM IV
MAGISTRATE JUDGE POSITION

3RD DISTRICT
CHARLIE BROWN

★

Dear Senators & Representatives of the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary:

4TH DISTRICT
DANIEL DERNULC

This letter is in support of a Magistrate Judge position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division IV, in Hammond, Indiana.

★

5TH DISTRICT
CHRISTINE CID

The caseload of Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, newly appointed to the bench in March of 2019, has expanded greatly. Last year the Hammond and Whiting City Courts were in the process of closing and have ceased to exist as of January 1, 2020. Those cases are being filed in her Court at this time along with ordinance violation cases from the Town of New Chicago. She has been meeting with the City and Town administrations of these local governments to develop a process and protocol for a smooth transition to her courtroom.

★

6TH DISTRICT
TED F. BILSKI

Even without the addition of these cases, the caseload in her Court has been expanding steadily. The three other Lake Superior Court, County Division Judges support the addition of a Magistrate for Judge Dimitrijevic. County Courts, Division I, II and III are located in Crown Point in south Lake County, the hub of County government. Judge Dimitrijevic's courtroom is the only Superior Court, County Division, located in north Lake County, in Hammond with both criminal and civil jurisdiction. Providing a Magistrate in her Hammond courtroom would alleviate the burden on her to accommodate a newly burgeoning caseload in north Lake County.

★

7TH DISTRICT
CHRISTIAN JORGENSEN

★

Judge Dimitrijevic hopes to add a problem-solving court to serve defendants who appear in her court and would benefit from such a program. This concept has proven successful in the Gary City Court and other courts throughout the State of Indiana. She has established the Driving While Suspended Program for indigent defendants and assists them in obtaining a valid license. Judge Dimitrijevic has begun outreach in the community with criminal justice students at the Hammond Area Career Center, and is working to initiate other programs for at-risk students with the North Township Trustee's Office and schools in Hammond and throughout north Lake County.

A judicial Magistrate for County Division IV in north Lake County would provide better, and more timely access to justice for all litigants in Lake County, both criminal and civil, and would enable Judge Dimitrijevic to run an expanded court caseload more effectively and efficiently.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this request to the Committee.

Very truly yours,



TED F. BILSKI
President, Lake County Council

cc: Honorable Aleksandra Dimitrijevic
Lake County Council Members
Lake County Board of Commissioners

8/14/2020

Subject:

Date: 8/14/2020 10:41:08 AM Central Standard Time

From: barczta@lakecountyin.org

To: laweaston@aol.com

Judge's request to be on 11-12-2019 agenda, agenda page & minutes page.

If there was any further discussion, Jasmine would have to listed to tape if you need.



THE SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY

County Division – Room 4
232 Russell Street • Hammond, Indiana 46320
(219) 933-2841 • Fax: (219) 933-2833

Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic

November 5, 2019

Ted F. Bilski
President, Lake County Council
2293 N. Main St.
Crown Point, IN 46307

RE: LAKE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT, COUNTY DIVISION IV
MAGISTRATE/REFEREE POSITION

Dear President Bilski:

As you know, I requested the Senate and House Joint Interim Study Committee on Courts and Judiciary to approve and recommend the creation of the position of Magistrate under I.C. 33-33-45-11 for Lake County Superior Court, County Division IV. The Court presently has a Referee, but is in need of a full-time Magistrate. Unfortunately, due to procedure requirements the request was tabled at the last Committee hearing on October 17, 2019. The request will not be considered again until budget year 2020.

Accordingly, I am requesting to be placed on the November 12, 2019 agenda the creation of a Court Administrator/Referee position pursuant to I.C. 33-33-45-12(a) and I.C. 33-33-45-12(b). Attached please find a copy of my September 27, 2019 letter to the Interim Study Commission on Courts and Judiciary, and a copy of the October 16, 2019 letter from the County Council supporting the request for the Magistrate position. All relevant information regarding the need for the position is contained in the letters.

This request is for the 2020 Court Budget, which cannot be amended until January 1, 2020. Accordingly, I am asking that the position be created and take effect on January 1, 2020.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,

Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, Judge
Superior Court of Lake County
County Division – Room 4

Encs.

cc: Lake County Council Members
Ray Szarnch
Terry Barczak



THE SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY

County Division – Room 4

232 Russell Street • Hammond, Indiana 46320

(219) 933-2841 • Fax: (219) 933-2833

Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic

September 27, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, and I have been recently appointed to serve as the judicial officer for the Lake Superior Court, County Division Room Four, in Hammond, Indiana. I am seeking legislation be passed approving a magistrate position for the Court.

As a new judge, I have had the daunting task of understanding and learning not only the legal aspects of the position but also the administrative aspects of running an office. It was somewhat of a difficult transition since the previous judge left several months prior to my arrival. As I had to learn everything on my own, I found that many things needed to be improved or changed.


In addition, while the Court was in the process of reinventing itself, several other courts were in the process of closing their doors. Beginning January 2020, the cases from those courts will be re-docketed and will be filed in the Lake Superior Court. Those outside courts include Hammond City Court and Whiting City Court. New Chicago Town Court ordinances will now be filed in Lake Superior Court as well. Finally, I am in the process of forming a Drug/Mental Health Problem Solving Court.

Currently, the Court is handling several court calls out of one single room. All other Lake Superior Courts operate two rooms simultaneously. One room handles all civil cases while the other room handles all criminal cases. Due to the volume of cases that will be handled by Room Four, I am currently in the process of setting up another courtroom. Starting January 2020, there will be two separate courtrooms; one exclusively handling criminal cases and the problem solving court, and the other handling small claims cases, ordinance violations, and other civil matters.

By having two judicial officers hearing cases simultaneously, we will be able to accommodate all of the cases coming from Hammond City Court, Whiting City Court, New Chicago Town Court, and the Drug/Mental Health Court. As a public servant, my goal is to always accommodate the people of Lake County.

This is a basic plan for how the Court will be evolving in the future. I hope this helps explain the vision and goals of the Court and shows that a magistrate position is a necessity in order to truly serve the people of this county. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,


Aleksandra Dimitrijevic
Judge

LAKE COUNTY COUNCIL

LAKE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
2203 NORTH MAIN STREET
CROWN POINT, INDIANA 46307
219-766-3280
FAX: 219-766-3283



LAKE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
CROWN POINT, INDIANA



1ST DISTRICT
DAVID TIGANI

October 16, 2019

★

Senator Erin Houchin
Indiana State Capitol Building
200 W. Washington St.
Indpls., IN 46204

2ND DISTRICT
ALFREDO MENCHACA

★

RE: HONORABLE ALEKSANDRA DIMITRIJEVIC
LAKE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT, COUNTY DIVISION,
ROOM IV
MAGISTRATE JUDGE POSITION

3RD DISTRICT
CHARLIE BROWN

★

Dear Senators & Representatives of the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary:

4TH DISTRICT
DANIEL DERKULC

This letter is in support of a Magistrate Judge position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division IV, in Hammond, Indiana.

★

5TH DISTRICT
CHRISTINE CO

Beginning in January, the caseload of Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, newly appointed to the bench last March, will expand greatly. The Hammond and Whiting City Courts are in the process of closing and will cease to exist on January 1, 2020. Those cases are scheduled to be filed in her Court at that time along with ordinance violation cases from the Town of New Chicago. She is in the process of meeting with the City and Town administrations of these local governments to develop a process and protocol for a smooth transition to her courtroom.

★

6TH DISTRICT
TED F. BILSKY

★

Even without the addition of these cases, the caseload in her Court has been expanding steadily. The three other Lake Superior Court, County Division Judges support the addition of a Magistrate for Judge Dimitrijevic. County Courts, Division I, II and III are located in Crown Point in south Lake County, the hub of County government. Judge Dimitrijevic's courtroom is the only Superior Court, County Division, located in north Lake County, in Hammond with both criminal and civil jurisdiction. Providing a Magistrate in her Hammond courtroom would alleviate the burden on her to accommodate a newly burgeoning caseload in north Lake County.

7TH DISTRICT
CHRISTIAN JORGENSEN

★

Judge Dimitrijevic hopes to add a problem-solving court to serve defendants who appear in her court and would benefit from such a program. This concept has proven successful in the Gary City Court and other courts throughout the State of Indiana. Judge Dimitrijevic has begun outreach in the community with criminal justice students at the Hammond Area Career Center, and is working to initiate other programs for at-risk students with the North Township Trustee's Office and schools in Hammond and throughout north Lake County.

A judicial Magistrate for County Division IV in north Lake County would provide better, and more timely access to justice for all litigants in Lake County, both criminal and civil, and would enable Judge Dimitrijevic to run an expanded court caseload more effectively and efficiently.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this request to the Committee.

Very truly yours,



TED F. BILSKI
President, Lake County Council

cc: Honorable Aleksandra Dimitrijevic
Lake County Council Members
Lake County Board of Commissioners

SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY

OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

2293 North Main Street
Crown Point, Indiana 46307
219-755-3494
Fax 219-755-3004

Martin Goldman
Court Administrator
Jury Administrator



October 15, 2019

Ethan Hudson
Interim Study Committee on the Courts and Judiciary

Dear Sir:

I am writing in support of the request for full-time Magistrate in the Courtroom of Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, Lake Superior Court, County Division 4 in Hammond, IN.

County Division 4 currently maintains a Judge and a Referee/Court Administrator who is utilized 1.5 days per week or 30% of a full-time judicial officer. As seen in the table below, there is an upward trend in judicial need for this court:

	JUDICIAL NEED	JUDICIAL OFFICERS
2016	1.12	1.30
2017	1.31	1.30
2018	1.44	1.30
2019	1.56 (following 2 nd Q)	1.30

Hon. John M. Sedla
Chief Judge

CIVIL DIVISION

Hon. John M. Sedla
Room 1, Hammond
Hon. Calvin D. Hawkins
Room 2, East Chicago
Hon. Thomas P. Hallett
Room 3, Gary
Hon. Kristina C. Kantar
Room 4, Gary
Hon. Stephen E. Scheele
Room 5, Hammond
VACANT
Senior Judge, Room 6, Crown Point
Hon. Bruce D. Parent
Senior Judge, Room 7, Crown Point

COUNTY DIVISION

Hon. Nicholas J. Schiralli
Room 1, Crown Point
Hon. Shelia M. Moss
Room 2, Crown Point
Hon. Julie N. Cantrell
Senior Judge, Room 3, Crown Point
Hon. Aleksandra Dimitrijevic
Room 4, Hammond

CRIMINAL DIVISION

Hon. Salvador Vasquez
Room 1, Crown Point
Hon. Clarence D. Murray
Senior Judge, Room 2, Crown Point
Hon. Diane Boswell
Room 3, Crown Point
Hon. Samuel L. Capps
Room 4, Crown Point

JUVENILE DIVISION

Hon. Thomas P. Stefanik, Jr.
Senior Judge, Crown Point

As we prepare to assimilate the tens of thousands of cases from the closing of the Hammond and Whiting City Courts, our County Division courts, especially County Division 4 in Hammond, will see an increase in filings from those attorneys who previously filed in the Hammond and Whiting City Courts. These city court closures are just the first in what we believe will be additional city/town court closures.

It is therefore imperative that additional judicial resources be provided to County Division 4, as they are the only County Division Court in Lake County with fewer than 2 full time judicial officers.

Thank you for your time. If I can be of additional assistance, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Martin Goldman
Lake County Court Administrator

3000 W. 93rd Avenue
Crown Point, Indiana 46307

15 West 4th Avenue
Gary, Indiana 46402

3711 Main Street
East Chicago, Indiana 46312

232 Russell Street
Hammond, Indiana 46320



THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF LAKE

2293 North Main Street
Crown Point, Indiana 46307
Phone: (219) 755-3290
Fax: (219) 755-3084

Kyle W. Allen, Sr., First District
Jerry Tippy, Second District
Michael C. Repay, Third District

October 18, 2019

Dear Members of the Legislative Committee on Courts and the Judiciary,

On behalf of the Lake County Board of Commissioners, please allow this correspondence to serve as a Letter in Support of the request by Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic to add a judicial Magistrate position for Lake County Superior, County Division Four Court. With the announcements of the closing of the Hammond and Whiting City Courts, and the assignments of New Chicago ordinance violations to her Courtroom commencing in January of 2020, we fully support her request to add an extra judicial officer.

In addition to the aforementioned cases being assigned to her Court, both the criminal and small claims caseloads have been steadily growing. According to a recent study by Lake County Court Administrator Marty Goldman, weighted caseloads in her courtroom have increased for each of the past three years.

The other three County Division Judges have shared with us that it is crucial for Judge Dimitrijevic to have a Magistrate to help manage these cases. We believe this will enable the judge to better serve the public and administer her court effectively and efficiently.

Judge Dimitrijevic was appointed to the bench in March of this year. In that short period of time, she has worked to reorganize and improve the court and staff by streamlining procedures and protocols. This has helped to enhance its professionalism and ability to serve the litigants who come to her court. Gaining a Magistrate in a timely manner is vital to these efforts, especially given the drastic caseload expansion anticipated to begin in January of 2020.

Additionally, Judge Dimitrijevic has already instituted a new measure we anticipate will result in cost-savings, by utilizing available technology in her 20-year-old courtroom that has never been used. Two afternoons a week, defendants in the Lake County Jail will now make their initial appearances before her via video conference. This means that sheriff's deputies will no longer spend those days transporting prisoners from Crown Point to Hammond. We anticipate this will result in a significant savings in transportation costs and will greatly reduce overtime hours by the sheriff's deputies.

The Board of Commissioners would like to thank you for your consideration in approving a Magistrate position for Lake County Superior Court, County Division Four. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Michael C. Repay, President
Lake County Board of Commissioners

SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY
COUNTY DIVISION III
2293 NORTH MAIN STREET
CROWN POINT, INDIANA 46307
(219) 755-3601

JULIE N. CANTRELL, JUDGE

October 2, 2019

Dear Legislative Committee Members,

I write in support of the creation of a Magistrate position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division Four. As Senior Judge of the County Division Courts, I am aware of the increase in the case volume in all four County Division Courts. The closing of the Hammond City Court and Whiting City Court, of which many cases will be sent to County Division Four, will greatly increase an already high case load.

Currently, each of the other three County Division Courts operate with two Judicial officers. Additionally, the weighted caseload data supports the addition of a Magistrate position in County Division Four. I respectfully request your consideration in the creation of said position.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Julie N. Cantrell
Senior Judge, County Division



LAKE SUPERIOR COURT
COUNTY DIVISION ROOM 1

2293 North Main Street
Crown Point, Indiana 46307

NICHOLAS J. SCHIRALLI
Judge



Phone (219) 755-3570
Fax (219) 755-3006

Dear Committee Members:

I am a colleague of Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, and I support her request for a magistrate position for the Lake Superior Court, County Division, Room Four. The caseload of the County Division of the Lake Superior Court is among the largest caseloads in Indiana. With the closures of the Hammond City Court and the Whiting City Court, our caseloads will increase. Room four of the County Division, is the only court within the County Division, that does not have a magistrate. The other Three Rooms of the County Division were each given authority by the State Legislature to appoint a magistrate years ago. In my opinion, a magistrate for Room Four is long overdue.

Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic was appointed to the bench in February 2019. She is a very dedicated and hardworking Judge. However, she is in need of assistance. She is looking for ways to improve the efficiency of her court. Allowing her to appoint a magistrate will provide for better efficiency, and will help to provide speedy justice to the litigants that come before the court. I fully support her request to be able to appoint a magistrate.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Nicholas J. Schiralli
Judge, Lake Superior Court, County Division, Room One

State of Indiana

Senate

Senator Frank Mrvan
Assistant Minority Caucus Chair
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
(317) 232-9532
st@iga.in.gov

Committees:
Homeland Security and Transportation, RMM
Local Government, RMM
Veterans Affairs and The Military, RMM
Education & Career Development
Ethics
Health & Provider Services

October 1, 2019

Senator Erin Houchin
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2728

Dear Senator Houchin:

I am writing to request that the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary consider the request of the Lake County Superior Court, County Division Room Four, to add a magistrate position to the Court. I would greatly appreciate your consideration in adding this topic to the upcoming agenda for October 3rd to allow Judge Dimitrijevic to explain the Court's need.

Beginning next year, the Lake County Superior Court will be absorbing several dockets from the surrounding area. Hammond City Court, Whiting City Court, and New Chicago Town Court ordinances will all be filed in the Lake County Superior Court. Additionally, Judge Dimitrijevic is currently forming a Drug/Mental Health Problem Solving Court as well. Next year County Division Room Four will operate two rooms: one exclusively handling criminal cases and hosting the Drug/Mental Health Court, and the other handling small claims cases, ordinance violations, and other civil matters. Currently, this is the only Lake Superior Court operating out of a single room.

Over the past several years, the weighted caseload for County Division Room Four has increased by (0.29) intervals, but the number of judicial officers allocated has remained stagnant. Note that this accounting does not consider the additional courts to be re-docketed under its jurisdiction in 2020; there is no doubt that this will increase the Courts "Severity of Need."

Given the increased need for additional judicial officers, I sincerely request you consider this request.

Sincerely,



Frank Mrvan
Indiana State Senator
Senate District 1

CC: David Boyer, Legislative Assistant



SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY

COUNTY DIVISION - ROOM NO. 2
2293 NORTH MAIN STREET
CROWN POINT, INDIANA 46307
(219) 755-3580

SHEILA M. MOSS, JUDGE

Dear Legislative Committee,

This letter is in support of my colleague, Judge Aleksandra Dimitrijevic, who is requesting and is in need of a Magistrate for her court in Hammond, Lake Superior Court, County Division, Room Four. We other three Superior Court judges have Magistrates to help us deal with the large caseloads we deal with regularly. Such a support position is critical to help each of us not only effectively deal with our caseloads, but also to allow us to effectively administer our courtrooms.

Judge Dimitrijevic's caseload has been growing steadily and in January will become even larger, as her court is set to take on the cases from both Hammond and Whiting City Courts, which have large caseloads, as well as the cases in New Chicago City Court. A caseload study has shown the numbers in her court already have been increasing and will swell greatly once those other courts shut down and are assigned to her court.

I believe it is important to make sure that Judge Dimitrijevic, as a new judge, has the resources to help her succeed and maintain the high standards she has sought to implement since she took the bench earlier this year. The Magistrate position will be crucial in helping her make sure defendants and the public are fairly, efficiently and properly served, and that she and her court are not overwhelmed.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sheila M. Moss", is written over a faint, circular official stamp. The signature is in dark ink and is clearly legible.

Sheila Moss

Judge, Lake Superior Court, County Division, Room Two

4. HOBERT TWP. ASSESSOR - 1500 - continued (HAMM)

B. Transfer - Reassessment 2015 Fund

REVISED

From: 41100 Overtime: \$3,000.00
41190 Part Time \$5,000.00
44410 Office Machines \$3,000.00
To: 41220 FICA \$ 500.00
43190 Professional Services \$6,000.00
44410 Furniture & Fixtures \$4,500.00
TOTAL \$11,000.00 *Appr*

10. COUNTY COURT DIV. IV - 4070 - continued (HAMM)

REVISED

B. Rev. 144 - Fund 001 - Effective Date 1-1-20

	Present	Proposed	Proposed
11413-002 Court Admin/Referee	-0-	\$88,692	\$88,692 <i>Appr</i>

11. SHERIFF'S JAG 2015 GRANT - 1015 - continued (CID)

REVISED

Appropriations - JAG Grant Fund 262

41100 Overtime	\$ 5,000.00
41220 FICA	\$ 63.50
41230 PERF	\$ 117.88
41390 Supplemental Pay	\$ 648.77
42410 Other Supplies	\$10,997.00
43190 Other Professional Services	\$40,519.00
44490 Other Equipment	\$39,133.00
<u>TOTAL \$96,479.15</u>	<i>Appr</i>

PUBLIC COMMENTS

*Don Bernick - D.O.J. Release of Jail Oversight
Michael Dawson - Harassment by Official*

County Council	2019 Regular Meeting		November 12, 2019 10:00 A.M.
Council (\$500)	Demule	Jorgensen	Majority voted "yes" Motion carried 7-0.
Superior Court – Civil (\$1,000)	Jorgensen	Demule	Majority voted "yes" Motion carried 7-0
Court Administrator (\$300)	Jorgensen	Hamm	Majority voted "yes" Motion carried 7-0.
County Div. I (\$4,304)	Menchaca	Jorgensen	Majority voted "yes" Motion carried 7-0.
Court County Div. III (\$50)	Demule	Jorgensen	Majority voted "yes" Motion carried 7-0.
County Court Div. IV (\$600)	Hamm	Brown	Majority voted "yes" Motion carried 7-0
Jail (\$15,797)	Demule	Jorgensen	Majority voted "yes" Motion carried 7-0
Hobart Twp. Assessor (\$11,000)	No Action		
Hobart Twp. Assessor Revised (\$11,000)	Hamm	Demule	Majority voted "yes" Motion carried 7-0
Commissioners (\$30,000)	Brown	Hamm	Majority voted "yes" Motion carried 7-0

Footnotes: Clerk (\$2,300) amount was amended from \$2,300 to \$500 by Cld.

In the Matter of County Court Div. III – 4050 – Create 1 New Line Item – 001

Demule made the motion, seconded by Jorgensen, to create the following new line item:

001-4050-43995 Other Services & Charges

Majority voted yes. Motion carried 7-0.

In the Matter of County Court Div. IV – 4070 – Create 1 New Line Item – 001

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Jorgensen, to create the following new line item:

001-4070-44490 Other Equipment

Majority voted yes. Motion carried 7-0.

In the Matter of County Court Div. IV – 4070 – Revised 144 – Fund 001 – Effective Date 1-1-20

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Difference</u>
11413-002 Court Admin/Referee	-0-	\$1.00	\$1.00

No Action

X In the Matter of County Court Div. IV – 4070 – Revised 144 – Fund 001 – Effective Date 1-1-20 REVISED

Hamm made the motion, seconded by Cld, to approve. Majority voted yes. Motion carried 7-0.

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Difference</u>
11413-002 Court Admin/Referee	-0-	\$88,692	\$88,692

In the Matter of Sheriff's JAG 2015 Grant – 1015 – Rev. 144 – JAG Grant Fund 262 Retro to 10-1-19

Cld made the motion, seconded by Hamm, to approve. Majority voted yes. Motion carried 7-0.

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Difference</u>
38001-00X Supplemental Pay	-0-	\$630.15	\$630.15