



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Committee for Public Counsel Services
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TO: CPCS Staff and Private Counsel

DATE: January 23, 2009

FROM: William J. Leahy

RE: **REDUCTION IN MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE**

This is to inform you that the reimbursement rate for mileage traveled in the course of CPCS representation is being reduced from forty cents per mile to thirty cents per mile, effective on February 1, 2009. This action, which I recommended and which was approved by the Committee for Public Counsel Services at its meeting last evening, is in line with the reduction in judicial branch mileage reimbursements recently announced by CJAM Mulligan.

This reduction reflects the significant drop in the price of gasoline during recent months, and it will be revisited if that price increases significantly from its current level. The reduction is estimated to save \$151,250 during the remainder of FY09, and \$363,000 in FY10.

I regret the need to reduce mileage reimbursement at a time when hourly rates and salaries are stagnant, and when its impact falls on people who are working so hard and with such commitment to representing poor people zealously and effectively. I would not have recommended this action if I were not convinced that it is a necessary step in our advocacy for continued full funding of the right to counsel, even during such a momentous fiscal crisis as currently confronts the Commonwealth. As we enter a budget process in which competition for scarce public funds will be fierce, and the outcome uncertain, we have to take all reasonable steps to control spending, and we have concluded that given current fuel prices, this is one such step.

Thank you for your continuing commitment to the effective representation of people who cannot afford to pay for the legal assistance to which they are entitled by law. Please communicate any negative impact of this reduction directly to me at wleahy@publiccounsel.net.