



COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC COUNSEL SERVICES

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Dear Private Bar Panelists,

The Governor released her FY27 budget proposal this past week. While we are still reviewing the details, we wanted to share an initial summary of what it means for CPCS and to the private bar.

The Governor's proposal falls short of both our maintenance and initiative requests.

Private Counsel (0321-1510):

- **Maintenance request:** Maintenance Funding for this line item is a major concern. The private counsel account funding level in the Governor's proposal will likely not cover our anticipated need based on spending projection calculated by the new rates, which could increase pressure on appointment capacity and case coverage. Our request was \$250.1M, the Governor's recommendation is \$245.8M leaving a significant shortfall.
- **Increase in Rates/ Expansion request:** In preparation for FY27 appropriation deliberations, the Committee studied and endorsed a proposal for a \$15/hour increase in all practice areas beginning in **FY28**. Even though that request would not require funding in FY27, we were hopeful the necessary language would be included. This language was being requested to authorize a third-year increase in FY28 to follow the amounts authorized last fall for the FY 26 and FY27 budgets. Unfortunately, the Governor did not

adopt this proposal. We will be working with our funders in the House and Senate to include this additional language .

- **Court Costs and Expert Services (0321-1520):** This line item is also underfunded relative to our request and projected need. The request by CPCS was for \$38M and the Governor recommended \$25.1M. which would have been level funding from last year's initial appropriation. One encouraging sign is that the Governor just filed a supplemental appropriation Thursday recommending the balance needed for this year, which provides evidence that those funds will be needed I FY27 as well.

Although we recognize the uncertainty of the fiscal situation in Massachusetts and nationally and empathize the tough decisions our funders must face, we will continue to advocate during the upcoming legislative deliberations with our bar association partners. We are already scheduling meetings with House and Senate legislators and staff to advocate for the CPCS budget request. We will be updating you all as the process evolves.

The CPCS budget can be found here: <https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy27/appropriations/judiciary/public-counsel/?tab=historical-budget>