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Friend of the Court Grievances
Annual Report to the Legislature
Calendar Year 2007

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT
State Court Administrative Office
Friend of the Court Bureau

April 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Friend of the Court Bureau's 24th Annual Grievance Report to the Michigan Legislature.

The Friend of the Court Bureau ("the Bureau") is part of the State Court Administrative Office. The Bureau was created by the Friend of the Court Act, 1982 PA 294; MCL 552.501 et seq. ("the Act"). Among other duties, the Act requires the Bureau to collect data on the operations of county friend of the court ("FOC") offices, including data on all grievances filed with county FOCs, and the FOCs' responses to those grievances.

One section of the Act, MCL 552.519(3)(d), requires the Bureau to prepare an annual FOC grievance report to the Michigan Legislature. That report must summarize the grievances that were filed with FOCs during the preceding year, detail how the grievances were resolved, and state the number of grievances that remained pending at the end of the year.

During the 2007 calendar year, 623 grievances were filed with county FOC offices, which represents a 1 percent decrease from 2006. For 2007, the ratio of open FOC cases to grievances filed was 1,228:1. The comparable ratio in 2006 was 1,216:1.

Grievances sometimes raise issues that the Act does not recognize as "grievable." Examples of nongrievable issues include: complaints about the substance of a court's ruling; complaints about the substance of a FOC's recommendation to a court; and issues that must be addressed by some agency other than the FOC. The FOCs accept these grievances and respond to them, but the response may simply inform the grievant that the issue is not grievable under the Act. A grievance also occasionally raises multiple issues. The FOC then will respond substantively only to those issues that are grievable.

In this annual report, grievance responses are grouped into four categories: (1) grievances acknowledged in full; (2) grievances acknowledged in part; (3) grievances denied; and (4) grievances deemed to be nongrievable. During the past year, 34 grievances were acknowledged in full, 78 were acknowledged in part, 443 were denied, 76 were deemed nongrievable, and 8 remained pending as of December 31, 2007. Note: A single grievance with multiple issues may result in more than one response. For example, a single grievance may contain one issue that is denied, while another issue in the same grievance may be acknowledged in part.

The 623 grievances that were filed with county FOC offices raised a total of 891 discrete and grievable issues. Of those issues, 65 percent (584) were complaints about some aspect of FOC office operations, while 35 percent (307) were criticisms of an individual FOC employee's performance.

In the "office operations" category, 60 percent (349) raised a child support issue, 10 percent (61) focused on parenting time, 5 percent (30) involved custody, and another 5 percent (29) alleged gender bias. The remaining 20 percent (115) were classified as "other" because the issues that they raised were

unique or nearly so, and did not fit into the categories listed above.

In response to the grievances of all types that county FOCs acknowledged either in full or in part, the FOCs changed their office procedures in 17 instances and took personnel actions involving 27 individual employees.

The attachments that follow provide more detailed grievance data and some Web links to additional information about the FOC grievance process. Also attached is a separate summary of grievance processing by FOC Citizen Advisory Committees in the four counties that have such committees.

Links to Additional Information:

Grievance Report Links

SCAO Grievance Forms:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/domesticrelations/focgeneral/foc1a.pdf>

Statute describing grievance process:

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(qadqm1nshwju4rymkvim41eb\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-552-526](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(qadqm1nshwju4rymkvim41eb)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-552-526)

Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committee Supplement Links

Citizen Advisory Committee Reporting Forms (also can be found in Attachment C of the 2004 Grievance Report): <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/focb/grievrpt2004.pdf>

1998 PA 551 (also can be found in Attachment D of the 2004 Grievance Report)

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/focb/grievrpt2004.pdf>.

Michigan Court Rule 3.218:

<http://courtofappeals.mijud.net/rules/documents/1Chapter3SpecialProceedingsandActions.pdf>

2004 PA 210 (also can be found in Attachment F of the 2004 Grievance Report):

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2003-2004/publicact/pdf/2004-PA-0210.pdf>

Recommendation for random selection of grievances (also can be found in Attachment G of the 2004 Grievance Report):

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/focb/grievrpt2004.pdf>

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE DATA CHARTS THAT FOLLOW

TOTAL FILED: Number of grievances filed in each office during the reporting year of January 1 through December 31.

PENDING: Number of grievances not resolved during the reporting year.

POSSIBLE GRIEVANCE RESPONSES:

A/F: Acknowledged in full - merit in grievance.

A/P: Acknowledged in part - merit in part of grievance.

D: Denied - no merit in grievance.

NG: Nongrievable - issue does not come under the grievance procedure.

PR: Pending response - number of grievances not resolved at the time the grievance report was submitted to the State Court Administrative Office.

Dupl: Duplicate - same party filed a grievance on the same issue.

**Same Party/
New Grievance:** Same party filed a prior grievance dealing with items not addressed in current grievance.

GRIEVANCE ISSUE CATEGORIES:

Empl: Number of grievances filed that included an employee problem.

Office Operations: This broad category (for which the charts do not show a cumulative number) includes grievances regarding support, parenting time, custody, gender, or "other." The charts do provide numbers for each of those "office operations" components.

Supp: Number of grievances in which support-related concerns were at issue.

Par Time: Number of grievances in which parenting time concerns were at issue.

Cust: Number of grievances in which custody concerns were at issue.

Gend Based: Number of grievances in which gender concerns were at issue.

Other: Number of grievances in which other concerns not related to support, parenting time, custody, or gender were at issue.

GRIEVANCE RESULTS:

Chg. Policy/Ops: Change in Office Operation - grievances resulted in change in office operation.

Pers Action: Grievances resulted in personnel or employee action.

Footnotes: A single grievance may involve both an employee and office operations. Therefore, the total number of grievances filed may be less than the total number of employee-related grievances plus the number of office operation-related grievances.

A grievance may involve multiple concerns that require a finding of the court response. One response may address multiple concerns. Therefore, the total number of grievance concerns (e.g., custody, parenting time, support, gender, and other) may exceed the total number of grievances filed. Also, one FOC response may address multiple concerns.

| County | Grievance Comparisons and Totals | | | | | Grievance Responses | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----|-----|----|----|
| | 2007 Caseload | 2007 Total Filed | 2006 Total Filed | Percentage Change from 2006 | 2007 Ratio to Cases | Response over 30 days | A/F | A/P | D | NG |
| ALCONA/ ARENAC/ IOSCO/ OSCODA | 3,950 | 7 | 5 | 40% | 1 : 564 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 0 |
| ALGER | 431 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 : 431 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ALLEGAN | 5,433 | 6 | 13 | -54% | 1 : 906 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| ALPENA/ MONTMORENCY | 2,485 | 3 | 0 | 300% | 1 : 828 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| ANTRIM/ GRAND TRAVERSE/ LEELANAU | 6,785 | 6 | 7 | -14% | 1 : 1,131 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| BARRY | 3,871 | 18 | 18 | 0% | 1 : 215 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 1 |
| BAY | 8,301 | 5 | 5 | 0% | 1 : 1,660 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| BENZIE | 954 | 1 | *FTR | 0% | 1 : 954 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| BERRIEN | 17,722 | 8 | 1 | 700% | 1 : 2,215 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 0 |
| BRANCH | 3,249 | 0 | 3 | -300% | 0 : 3,249 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CALHOUN | 17,869 | 35 | 25 | 40% | 1 : 511 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 32 | 1 |
| CASS | 4,080 | 4 | 1 | 300% | 1 : 1,020 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| CHARLEVOIX | 1,625 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 : 1,625 | | | | | |
| CHEBOYGAN/PRESQUE ISLE | 2,131 | 2 | 2 | 0% | 1 : 1,066 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| CHIPPEWA | 2,092 | 1 | 1 | 0% | 1 : 2,092 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| CLARE | 2,063 | 3 | *FTR | 0% | 1 : 688 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| CLINTON | 3,007 | 2 | 3 | -33% | 1 : 1,504 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| DELTA | 2,200 | 1 | 3 | -67% | 1 : 2,200 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| DICKINSON | 1,529 | 3 | 1 | 200% | 1 : 510 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| EATON | 6,938 | *FTR | *FTR | 0% | 0 : 6,938 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| EMMET | 1,652 | 0 | 3 | -300% | 0 : 1,652 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GENESEE | 54,948 | 32 | 43 | -26% | 1 : 1,717 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 30 | 2 |
| GLADWIN | 1,256 | 1 | 1 | 0% | 1 : 1,256 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| GOGEBIC | 723 | 0 | *FTR | 0% | 0 : 723 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GRATIOT | 2,746 | 2 | 2 | 0% | 1 : 1,373 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| HILLSDALE | 3,320 | 1 | 0 | 100% | 1 : 3,320 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| HOUGHTON/ BARAGA/ KEWEENAW | 1,986 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 : 1,986 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HURON | 1,575 | 0 | 2 | -200% | 0 : 1,575 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| INGHAM | 24,175 | 36 | 36 | 0% | 1 : 672 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 32 | 3 |

| County | Grievance Comparisons and Totals | | | | | Response | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----|-----|----|----|
| | 2007 Caseload | 2007 Total Filed | 2006 Total Filed | Percentage Change from 2006 | 2007 Ratio to Cases | over 30 days | A/F | A/P | D | NG |
| IONIA | 4,650 | 0 | 2 | -200% | 0 : 4,650 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| IRON | 534 | 0 | *FTR | 0% | 0 : 534 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ISABELLA | 2,622 | 9 | 2 | 350% | 1 : 291 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| JACKSON | 15,303 | 8 | 5 | 60% | 1 : 1,913 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 0 |
| KALAMAZOO | 19,475 | 11 | 7 | 57% | 1 : 1,770 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| KENT | 37,429 | 37 | 50 | -26% | 1 : 1,012 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 17 | 6 |
| LAKE | 868 | 0 | *FTR | 0% | 0 : 868 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| LAPEER | 5,866 | 17 | 13 | 31% | 1 : 345 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 4 |
| LENAWEE | 7,314 | 8 | 5 | 60% | 1 : 914 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| LIVINGSTON | 6,187 | 5 | 11 | -55% | 1 : 1,237 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| LUCE | 858 | 0 | *FTR | 0% | 0 : 858 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MACKINAC | 474 | *FTR | *FTR | 0% | 0 : 474 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MACOMB | 37,513 | 31 | 23 | 35% | 1 : 1,210 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 29 | 0 |
| MANISTEE | 1,227 | 6 | 8 | -25% | 1 : 205 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| MARQUETTE | 2,433 | 0 | 2 | -200% | 0 : 2,433 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MASON | 1,483 | 1 | 0 | 100% | 1 : 1,483 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| MECOSTA | 2,708 | 1 | 3 | -67% | 1 : 2,708 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| MENOMINEE | 1,472 | 3 | *FTR | 0% | 1 : 491 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| MIDLAND | 4,116 | 4 | 2 | 200% | 1 : 1,029 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| MONROE | 9,898 | 7 | 5 | 40% | 1 : 1,414 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 1 |
| MONTCALM | 5,628 | 1 | 0 | 100% | 1 : 5,628 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| MUSKEGON | 22,555 | 12 | 16 | -25% | 1 : 1,880 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 4 |
| NEWAYGO | 3,654 | 2 | 9 | -78% | 1 : 1,827 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| OAKLAND | 51,865 | 99 | 76 | 30% | 1 : 524 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 78 | 7 |
| OCEANA | 1,497 | 0 | 2 | -200% | 0 : 1,497 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ONTONAGON | 336 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 : 336 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OSCEOLA | 1,788 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 : 1,788 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OTSEGO/ CRAWFORD/ KALKASKA | 3,838 | 6 | 9 | -33% | 1 : 640 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| OTTAWA | 11,586 | 6 | 13 | -54% | 1 : 1,931 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| ROSCOMMON/OGEMAW | 2,837 | 4 | 12 | -67% | 1 : 709 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| SAGINAW | 22,782 | 5 | 21 | -76% | 1 : 4,556 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| ST. CLAIR | 10,758 | 8 | 2 | 300% | 1 : 1,345 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 3 |

| County | Grievance Comparisons and Totals | | | | | Grievance Responses | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| | 2007 Caseload | 2007 Total Filed | 2006 Total Filed | Percentage Change from 2006 | 2007 Ratio to Cases | Response over 30 days | A/F | A/P | D | NG |
| ST. JOSEPH | 4,748 | 1 | 0 | 100% | 1 : 4,748 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| SANILAC | 2,558 | 1 | 1 | 0% | 1 : 2,558 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| SCHOOLCRAFT | 617 | 0 | *FTR | 0% | 0 : 617 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SHIAWASSEE | 4,873 | *FTR | *FTR | 0% | 0 : 4,873 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TUSCOLA | 3,447 | 6 | 4 | 50% | 1 : 575 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 1 |
| VANBUREN | 6,109 | 8 | 10 | -20% | 1 : 764 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 |
| WASHTENAW | 17,475 | 23 | 16 | 44% | 1 : 760 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 21 | 0 |
| WAYNE | 231,508 | 116 | 121 | -4% | 1 : 1,996 | 0 | 10 | 22 | 63 | 16 |
| WEXFORD/MISSAUKEE | 3,414 | *FTR | 7 | 0% | 0 : 3,414 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 764,925 | 623 | 632 | -1% | 1 : 1,228 | 47 | 34 | 78 | 443 | 76 |

* FTR stands for failed to report.

| County | Multiple Grievances | | | Grievance Issue Category | | | | | | Grievance Results | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Number Pending 12/31 | Dupl. | Same Party New Grievance | Empl. | Supp. | Par. Time | Cust. | Gend. Based | Other | Chg. Policy /Ops. | Pers. Action | No Action |
| ALCONA/ ARENAC/ IOSCO/ OSCODA | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| ALGER | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ALLEGAN | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| ALPENA/MONTMORENCY | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| ANTRIM/ GRAND TRAVERSE/ LEELANAU | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | | 1 | 6 |
| BARRY | 0 | 0 | 12 | 13 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 13 |
| BAY | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| BENZIE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| BERRIEN | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| BRANCH | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CALHOUN | 0 | 3 | 0 | 8 | 27 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 35 |
| CASS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| CHARLEVOIX | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CHEBOYGAN/PRESQUE ISLE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| CHIPPEWA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| CLARE | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| CLINTON | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| DELTA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| DICKINSON | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| EATON | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| EMMET | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GENESEE | 0 | 1 | 3 | 21 | 23 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 32 |
| GLADWIN | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| GOGEBIC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GRATIOT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| HILLSDALE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| HOUGHTON/ BARAGA/ KEWEENAW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HURON | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| INGHAM | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 23 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 35 |

| County | Number Pending 12/31 | Multiple Grievances | | Grievance Type Category | | | | | | Grievance Results | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | | Dupl. | Same Party New Grievance | Empl. | Supp. | Par. Time | Cust. | Gend. Based | Other | Chg. Policy /Ops. | Pers. Action | No Action |
| IONIA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| IRON | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ISABELLA | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| JACKSON | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| KALAMAZOO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| KENT | 0 | 2 | 3 | 15 | 15 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 36 |
| LAKE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| LAPEER | 0 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 17 |
| LENAWEE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| LIVINGSTON | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| LUCE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MACKINAC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MACOMB | 0 | 0 | 3 | 26 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 30 |
| MANISTEE | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| MARQUETTE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MASON | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| MECOSTA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| MENOMINEE | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| MIDLAND | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| MONROE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| MONTCALM | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| MUSKEGON | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| NEWAYGO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| OAKLAND | 2 | 8 | 2 | 77 | 54 | 18 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 88 |
| OCEANA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ONTONAGON | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OSCEOLA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OTSEGO/ CRAWFORD/ KALKASKA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| OTTAWA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| ROSCOMMON/OGEMAW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| SAGINAW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| ST. CLAIR | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 |

| County | Number Pending 12/31 | Multiple Grievances | | Grievance Type Category | | | | | | Grievance Results | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | | Dupl. | Same Party New Grievance | Empl. | Supp. | Par. Time | Cust. | Gend. Based | Other | Chg. Policy /Ops. | Pers. Action | No Action |
| ST. JOSEPH | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| SANILAC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| SCHOOLCRAFT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SHIAWASSEE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TUSCOLA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| VANBUREN | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| WASHTENAW | 0 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 23 |
| WAYNE | 3 | 6 | 3 | 23 | 74 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| WEXFORD/MISSAUKEE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 8 | 30 | 40 | 307 | 349 | 61 | 30 | 29 | 115 | 17 | 27 | 455 |

2007 Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committee Supplement

**State Court Administrative Office (SCAO)
Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB)
2007 Citizen Advisory Committee Report to the Legislature**

This report summarizes the current status of the friend of the court citizen advisory committees (CAC). A brief history of the CACs can be found in the State Court Administrative Office's 2004 Annual Grievance Report to the Legislature, available at: <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/focb/grievrpt2004.pdf>

Evaluative Summary

The FOCB was created within SCAO by the Friend of the Court Act in 1982. Later, the 1996 CAC legislation expanded SCAO/FOCB's duties by requiring that it prepare and submit to the Michigan Legislature an annual evaluative summary of the activities and functions of each CAC, the aggregate activities of all CACs, and any problems that impede the ability of CACs to satisfy the users of CAC services (MCL 552.519[D][iii]).

The summary is divided into five sections: (A) the number of meetings with and the advice given to the county board and the court; (B) the investigation of grievances; (C) other services provided; (D) problems encountered by the CACs; and (E) summary and conclusions.

The SCAO/FOCB mailed out the 2007 annual reporting forms to each county that had existing CACs in January 2008. This year's responses reflect the trend of recent years, i.e., that the majority of counties either have never formed a committee or have allowed their committee to become inactive. The following bulleted list shows the current status of CACs in Michigan. The data came from written reports, correspondence, and other contacts with the counties.

Counties that have formed CACs:

- 30 counties formed CACs since 1997 (when the CAC legislation took effect), but 26 of those were not active in 2007 or failed to submit a 2007 report.
- 4 CACs reported 2007 activities to the SCAO/FOCB.

Written comments provided by the counties indicate that lack of funding is the principal reason why a committee was not established or maintained.

Only the CACs for Kent, Livingston, Oakland, and Oceana filed 2007 reports. The following information is drawn from these reports.

- A. MCL 552.504a(1) provides that a CAC must meet a minimum of six times each year and submit its meeting minutes to the county board.**

1. Number of times each CAC met and offered advice to county board.

- Kent County CAC met six times and submitted its minutes to the county board after each meeting.
- Livingston County CAC met fewer than six times. There were no quorums thus no meeting minutes were submitted to the county.
- Oakland County CAC met 11 times and submitted its minutes to the county board after each meeting.
- Oceana County CAC met fewer than six times and appeared once at a county board meeting. The committee only meets when it has business.

B. MCL 552.526(3) provides that a party to a domestic relations matter who has a grievance concerning friend of the court office operations may file the grievance with the county CAC at any time during the proceedings. MCL 552.526 provides that the CAC shall establish a procedure for randomly selecting grievances submitted directly to the office of the friend of the court. MCL 552.526 also provides that the committee shall examine grievances filed with the friend of the court that allege a decision was made based on gender rather than the best interests of the child. The citizen advisory committee shall review the response of the office to these grievances and report its findings to the circuit court and the county board, either immediately or in the committee's annual report.

1. Number of grievances directly submitted to CACs.

- Kent County CAC received three grievances. They raised three support issues, one parenting time issue, one gender-based issue, and one issue considered “other.” The committee partially agreed with one grievance, and disagreed with two grievances.
- Livingston County CAC received one grievance. It raised issues that were considered “other.” Because the committee did not have enough members present for a quorum, no action was taken on the grievance.
- Oakland County CAC did not receive any grievances.
- Oceana County CAC did not receive any grievances.

In summary, there were four grievances filed directly with CACs. Those four grievances addressed three child support issues, one gender-based decision issues, one parenting time issue, and two issues considered “other.”

2. Number of grievances filed initially with the friend of the court, and later randomly selected for review by CACs; and grievances initially filed with the friend of the court that alleged gender-based decisions.

Random Selection Review:

- Kent County CAC randomly selected 12 grievances to review. Of those 12 grievances, one was a duplicate grievance. The grievances contained six support issues, three custody issues, one gender-based issue, and four issues considered “other.” The CAC fully agreed with the county friend of the court’s responses on all 12 issues.
- Livingston CAC randomly selected 10 grievances filed by eight parties (two parties had filed two grievances). The grievances contained three support issues, three parenting time issues, one custody issue, and eight issues considered “other”. Because there were not enough CAC members present to constitute a quorum, these grievances were not evaluated by the committee.
- Oakland County CAC randomly selected 11 grievances. Those 11 grievances raised 10 support issues, and three issues considered “other”. The CAC fully agreed with the friend of the court (FOC) five times, partially agreed three times, and disagreed twice. The CAC did not find any FOC decision that was based on gender.
- Oceana County CAC did not review any randomly-selected grievances.

In summary, only three CACs randomly selected and reviewed grievances that were initially filed with their local friend of the court. The 33 grievances selected included 19 support issues, three parenting time issues, one gender-based issue, four custody issues, and 15 issues considered “other.” The CACs fully agreed with the FOC’s response 17 times, partially agreed three times, and disagreed two times. Eleven grievances were not reviewed. Because not enough CAC members were present to establish a quorum, the Livingston CAC did not evaluate the 10 grievances that were submitted to the committee.

3. Review of Gender Based Grievances:

- Kent County CAC reviewed one grievance that alleged a gender-based decision. The grievance addressed a custody issue. The committee agreed with the FOC’s response.
- Livingston County CAC did not review any grievances that alleged gender-based decisions.
- Oakland County CAC reviewed one grievance that alleged a gender-based decision. The grievance addressed a support issue. The committee agreed with the FOC’s response.
- Oceana County CAC did not review any grievances that alleged a gender-based decision.

In summary, two CACs reviewed a total of two grievances that alleged gender-based decisions. Those grievances raised one custody issue and one support issue. The CACs fully agreed with both FOC grievance responses.

C. Other services provided by CACs.

The Oakland County CAC formed five subcommittees (grievance, governance, administration, liaison, and media) to address citizens' concerns. The Oakland County CAC also assisted the Oakland Circuit Court in the hiring of a Family Division referee.

D. MCL 552.519 (3)(d)(iii) requires an identification of problems that impede the efficiency of the activities and functioning of the citizen advisory committees and the satisfaction of the users of the committees services.

All CACs were asked to identify problems that have impeded their efficiency, activities, and ability to satisfy users. The following were responses received from the CACs:

- **Livingston:** "Committee members have left. There are currently only 5 to 9 members. Recruiting other individuals has not been productive. Attendance at meetings by members does not always occur. Without a quorum, meetings don't occur. Delay in receipt of grievances."
- **Oakland:** "Lack of knowledge of the Citizen Advisory Committee existence. Limited measures in determining the community need (a stated purpose of the CAC). Need for more active SCAO functions to facilitate CAC's performance of its duties and functions."

E. Summary and Conclusions

On January 10, 2008, the FOCB sent the annual CAC reporting forms and an explanatory cover memo to all counties that ever have formed CACs. The memo requested that the county report on its CAC activities, or contact SCAO to report that a CAC is longer active. The majority of the counties responded that their CAC is no longer active. Four counties provided annual reports.

Based on the reports submitted to SCAO, only two CACs (Kent and Oakland) are actively meeting (six or more times per year). The Livingston CAC never had a quorum of members at a meeting. The Oceana CAC committee only meets when there is business to address. The Kent County CAC met six times and the Oakland County CAC met 11 times in 2007.

Only Kent and Livingston County CACs had grievances filed directly with the committees (four). Of grievances initially filed with county friends of the court, Kent County

randomly selected 12 grievances to review and the Oakland CAC randomly selected 11 grievances. The Kent and Oakland County CACs each reviewed one grievance that alleged gender-based decision making.

In comparison to 2006:

- One more CAC reported in 2007 (four, versus three in 2006).
- There were two fewer reported grievances filed directly with the CACs in 2007 (four versus six in 2006).
- More grievances filed with the friend of the court were later randomly selected for review by CACs (33 versus 28 in 2006).

The State Court Administrative Office will continue to provide assistance to FOCs regarding CAC duties and responsibilities.