

LAKE COUNTY TRIAL COURT  
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BALDWIN, MICHIGAN 49304-7971

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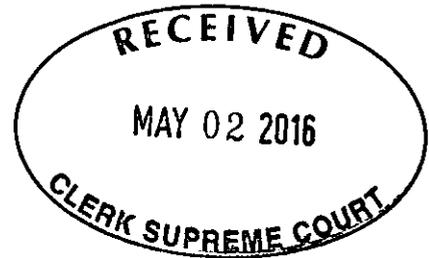
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April 29, 2016

Mr. Larry S. Royster  
Clerk of the Court  
Michigan Supreme Court  
Post Office Box 30052  
Lansing, Michigan 48909



Dear Clerk Royster:

First I would like to acknowledge and commend all the efforts to improve Michigan's indigent defense system. Clearly a great deal of thought and hard work has gone into the creation of the Proposed Minimum Standards for Indigent Defense. (ADM File No. 2015-7)

Of particular concern to our court is Standard 4, Counsel at First Appearance and other Critical Stages. This standard creates a significant challenge for our court and I suspect for other rural courts. In short, all of our indigent defense attorneys travel from adjoining counties. Scheduling all of a particular attorney's court appearances at one date and time is the only way which allows participation. Of particular significance is that presently, for persons incarcerated, arraignments occur anytime during the week as soon as paperwork is processed. As an aside, misdemeanor arraignments in the magistrate's court can occur at anytime.

Some have suggested that another local attorney could appear at these arraignments. We have none. A second suggestion, which I do not support, is to delay these arraignments to a set day and time to insure counsel's presence. While technology may assist, it will not guarantee the availability of counsel at all times and places.

I strongly urge the Court to consider these issues before adopting this standard.

Respectfully;

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right and then turns upwards at the end.

Honorable Mark S. Wickens  
Chief Trial Court Judge  
Lake County Trial Court

cc: file

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