

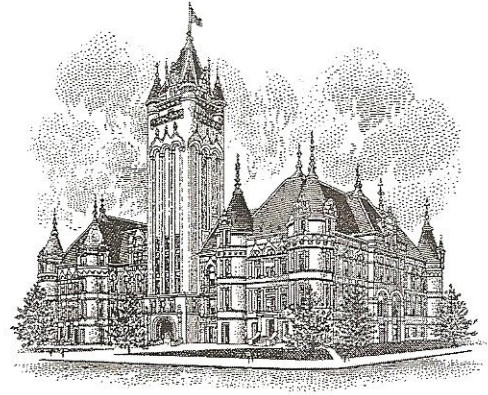
Superior Court of the State of Washington
for the County of Spokane
Department No. 7

Maryann C. Moreno

Judge

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October 21, 2011

I write this letter on behalf of the entire Spokane County Superior Court Bench. We are very concerned with proposed funding cuts to one of our local child advocacy agencies, Partners with Families & Children. Child abuse and neglect continues to be a major problem not only in our region but across the state. Cutting funding to this particular program will directly impact the care and services provided for Spokane's most vulnerable citizens: children who are victims of physical and sexual abuse.

We are cognizant of the budget shortfall faced by the State. We have endured our own struggles with funding, and we understand the difficult decisions that will shortly be made. From our perspective, the service that Partners provides to the community as well as the court system is invaluable. We consider the safety and well-being of our children nonnegotiable. Insuring that child victims receive the treatment and advocacy they deserve will ultimately result in improved outcomes for them. Investigating persons who commit crimes against our young citizens is essential to our criminal justice system.

Until the day comes when we can say we have eliminated child abuse and neglect from our community, Spokane desperately needs this organization to remain open and staffed to provide the forensic interviews, medical examinations, and child advocacy leadership role they currently play in our community.

While we understand the pressures on the state general fund, we ask that you find another solution that does not take away these essential services for our most vulnerable citizens.

Yours truly,

Maryann Moreno
Presiding Judge
Spokane County Superior Court

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