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Attorney General Kathy Jennings' FY2024 Budget presentation to OMB Director Cerron Cade at the OMB Public Hearing held in the Haslet Armory Office in Dover.

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning-

Director Cade thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present the Department of Justice, Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget. But before I begin, on behalf of the men and women of the DOJ I would like to express our appreciation for the support of OMB, the General Assembly and the Governor in the FY23 Budget process. Through your collective support we were able to address salary needs, general funding needs and support of a capital improvement project at our 900 King Street Office. Thank you.

I am joined today by Chief Deputy Attorney General Alex Mackler and have the support of the rest of our leadership team who are attending virtually.

OVERVIEW OF FUNDING REQUESTS

While the DOJ has a number of pressing needs represented in our request, I would like to highlight the following:

- The Department of Justice (DOJ) has a critical operational need to acquire additional electronic storage space. The current server storage space is rapidly reaching maximum capacity, which creates significant recovery vulnerability. And because of our obligations with the court and defense attorneys, we cannot delete our data. Simply put: we are out of room.
- Currently, the DOJ is not in the State eStar system, and we do not have an electronic Human Resource (HR) time and records management system. Our HR team is unable to view and manage leave in real-time. Much of the work is still collected by hand and paper. DOJ HR staff spend significant time just processing payroll, leaving little time to complete other important HR functions. We are requesting funding to implement the State's eStar system.
- The Division of Civil Rights and Public Trust (DCRPT) is responsible for protecting individual rights and liberties of Delawareans, and the enforcement of laws designed to ensure citizen trust in government. To fulfill that mission the DCRPT is in need of a

dedicated Victim Service Specialist (social worker) to address the needs of victims and provide support services as they navigate these sensitive and difficult situations.

- For our Criminal Division, we are requesting an additional Special Investigator in the Child Predator Unit to assist with the increased internet case referrals from the Apple Internet referral program, as well as the Cyber-Tips received from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. We are also requesting a Victim Service Specialist to engage with the residents of the City of Wilmington and assist the families of those impacted by gang violence.
- In our Family Division we are requesting a Special Investigator for the Human Trafficking Unit. The Human Trafficking Unit (HTU) was set-up in the Family Division in 2022 in response to the need to ensure consistent investigation and prosecution of Human Trafficking cases within the State of Delaware. HTU presently has two Deputy Attorneys General (DAGs), who are responsible for prosecuting cases of human trafficking presented by law enforcement agencies. The DOJ Special Investigator would provide investigatory support to the DAGs who are assigned these prosecutions.
- Funding is needed to support the salaries of two new positions in the DOJ Fraud and Consumer Protection Division. These positions were created in SB35 in support of the Department of Labor's Wage Theft Enforcement initiative. Only partial funding for 10 months was created in Section 109, of the epilogue language.
- The Department requests an \$18,500 increase in Contractual Services to fund the annual lease escalator for the DOJ Dover office. The current lease expires on December 31, 2027, and this request covers a continuation of the 3 percent escalator in the contract.
- DOJ is requesting an increase of \$100,000 in our transcription services funding line. The fees charged by the available state transcription vendors have changed, and the provider with the highest quality services is the most expensive. The increased costs combined with the increase of transcription needs due to the expanded court operations post COVID, and increased recordings related to the body worn camera initiative, place additional demands on transcription requests for trials.

PASSTHROUGHS

I also want to point out that in our budget request we have included requests for passthrough funding from CHILD, Inc. and Peoples Place. These agencies play a vital role in providing important services to the victims of domestic violence. And, over the last few years, they've seen other funding sources crater – at the exact time when COVID drove domestic violence, and domestic violence homicide, rates through the roof. Our state needs to continue to step up and support our victims. We wholeheartedly endorse the positive impact these agencies have in our community and support this critical funding.

CLOSING

In closing, thank you for the support and guidance provided by the OMB staff and for your continued willingness to discuss any and all budget issues that arise.

I also want to express my sincere thanks to our DOJ team for their hard work, not only today and in this budget presentation, but for their efforts every day in service to the people of Delaware and the cause of justice.

At this time, I welcome any questions that you may have.