

July 9, 2019

Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, Ca. 95814

Governor Newsom,

I am a freelance court reporter working in our state courts. I have been working in this profession for [YEARS] and have worked on a wide variety of cases, including [LIST CASE TYPES, homicide, sexual assaults, DUI's...lawsuits involving asbestos]. I have been honored to work in California's judicial system.

I am writing asking you to support AND fund an increase the statutory fee for producing an official court transcript – a fee that has been unchanged for 30 years. By law, only you and the Legislature can address this issue.

While court reporters, 90% of which are women, we spend countless hours over the evenings and weekends producing official court transcripts from shorthand notes. These official transcripts are critical to ensuring full access to justice for parties. Being an independent contractor, working per diem for the courts and not receiving the benefits of being employed by the courts, by statute, we are bound by the statutory fees set 29 years ago. We are responsible for the out-of-pocket expenses to produce the official transcripts, including thousands of dollars to purchase steno equipment, software updates, and printing supplies. We also pay the related taxes for these expenses.

Our only form of compensation for this time and these expenses is the “transcript fee,” statutorily set at .85 cents for every 100 words. This amount was set in statute 30 years ago and has never been updated. Only the Legislature and a signature from you can increase this rate.

While my expenses have increased over the years, the statutory rate has not. After 30 years, it's time to update this rate. Please support and fund the increase the statutory transcript rates by funding AB 1385, Transcript Rate Increase, authored by Assemblyman Miguel Santiago!

Sincerely,