

July 9, 2019

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
Office of the Governor
State Capitol Building, Suite 1173
Sacramento, Ca. 95814

Governor Newsom,

I am an official court reporter working at the [INSERT COURT]. 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 for support to increase the statutory fee for producing an official court transcript – a fee that has been unchanged for 29 years. By law, only you and the Legislature can address this issue.

While court reporters, 90% of which are women, are County employees during the day, 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. We do not receive overtime or additional pay for this time. Instead, by statute, during this unpaid time we are considered "independent contractors" and 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 us on this endeavor and fund AB 1385!

Sincerely,