

Ohio Court Reporters Association OCRA Cardinal Foundation

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February 9, 2018

National Court Reporters Association
Marcia Ferranto, Executive Director and CEO
NCRA Board of Directors
12030 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 400
Reston, Virginia 20191

Dear NCRA Board of Directors and Ms. Ferranto,

The Ohio Court Reporters Association (OCRA) is writing to express concerns about the recent loss of a Government Relations Department position within NCRA. The Government Relations Department is part and parcel to not only NCRA's core existence, but also to state associations' ability to thrive in representing the court reporting and captioning professions.

The OCRA Board of Directors has serious concerns about the lack of attention and funding provided to the Government Relations Department and urges reconsideration of budgetary resources to allow for additional staffing and manpower within the Government Relations Department.

Matt Barusch is but one individual with a host of daily obligations. Within the realm of legislation and government policy, it is often last-minute issues that arise which necessitate the need for immediate response and action. Unfortunately, OCRA has experienced firsthand the inability to receive timely assistance in responding to a damaging news article and statement from an Ohio Congressman about a Youngstown, Ohio, company providing voice recognition training and services for captioning, an inadequate communications method for Ohio's deaf and hard-of-hearing community. OCRA's first request for assistance was sent on December 4, 2017, and to date, despite some correspondence and assurances, our request has gone unfulfilled. Thankfully, however, on a different matter on which OCRA has reached out for assistance, we have received a timely response and were able to quickly schedule a conference call.

We are aware of the recent non-renewal of our Chief Washington Counsel and Lobbyist's contract. OCRA, along with many other state associations and individual reporters, have come to rely upon Dave Wenhold and his expertise for over 20 years within NCRA's Government Relations Department. While non-renewal of his contract is troublesome at best, our concern lies with NCRA's inability to assist state associations and reporters with profession-wide issues that often occur overnight.

Also of concern is the lack of communication coming from our national headquarters relating to matters that are of utmost importance to not only OCRA but to our members as well. There has been little by way of news releases relating to NCRA's drastic cuts in services that are vital to our professions' livelihood. OCRA relies on the information from NCRA in educating our members and nonmembers. With vague postings on Facebook, buried articles on theJCR.com, and listserv responses via email, OCRA has more questions than answers.

The Ohio Court Reporters Association would request an in-person meeting with Marcia Ferranto, Executive Director and CEO, and OCRA President-Elect Terri Sims, OCRA Vice President Kelly Linkowski, and myself, President of OCRA, prior to or during the upcoming NCRA Legislative Boot Camp, March 11-13. Representatives of OCRA plan to arrive in Reston, Virginia, on Saturday, March 10. We request this in-person meeting be scheduled so as not to conflict with our Boot Camp agenda, and we urge that all affected state associations be invited to have a representative attend this meeting.

Please advise, at your earliest convenience, the time and location for the in-person meeting with OCRA's representatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Douglas Bettis'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Douglas Bettis
2017-2018 President