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September 15, 2022

Mr. Karl Hade, Executive Secretary
100 N. 9th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
SENT VIA U.S. MAIL CERTIFIED RETURN RECEIPT

Mr. Jonathan Green, Director of Magistrate Services
100 N. 9th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
SENT VIA U.S. MAIL CERTIFIED RETURN RECEIPT

Re: 2022 Proposal and Request for Additional Compensation

Dear Messrs. Hade and Green:

The Virginia Magistrates Association continues the goal of communicating the needs of its members as related to their positions in the Virginia Office of the Executive Secretary under the Department of Magistrate Services. The Virginia Magistrates Association and magistrates across the Commonwealth are excited to have received the additional compensation included in the Virginia General Assembly's fiscal year budget for 2023. Magistrates received a targeted increase for the first time in over 10 years. Every milestone must be celebrated knowing that there is still more to accomplish.

On July 10, 2022, current magistrate salaries increased to a base level of \$54,000.00¹, magistrates with 2-4 years of experience received \$55,000, magistrates with 4-6 years of experience received \$55,500, magistrates with 6-8 years received \$56,000.00, magistrates with 8-10 years received \$56,500, and magistrate with "10 or more years received \$57,000.00. The implementation of the above did not include chief magistrates or magistrate regional supervisors, although they have magistrate authority and routinely perform these duties.¹

Many chief magistrates worked shifts and whole rotations to continue to ensure 24/7/365 coverage in the magistrate offices when magistrate retention was at critical low. In 2021 and 2022, there were districts that were 33% or higher below staffing levels. In 2020, during statewide shutdowns and the height of the

¹ Magistrate Retention Plan.

http://publicreports.dpb.virginia.gov/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=OB_DocView&Param1=72763616 & Jonathan Green email dated July 5, 2022.

COVID-19 pandemic, chief magistrates ensured their offices were safely staffed, chief magistrates and regional supervisors scoured store shelf for disinfecting supplies and personal protective equipment, directly worked with local emergency management teams to ensure safety all while making sure that magistrate offices remained open.

It is exciting that veteran magistrates were given additional monetary compensation. The Virginia Magistrates Association would like to see the most experienced magistrates have a larger increase. An increase for the career magistrate increases morale from the newest magistrate to the most veteran. When employees see that their dedication and experience are opportunities for monetary growth, all are more likely to stay in the system.

During the annual regional training, Director Jonathan Green stated “it’s an improvement, but we’re not done. There’s still room for further improvement... A step in the right direction, but it doesn’t mean our journey’s over.” We all agree that the increases implemented on July 10, 2022, is not the end for just compensation for employees in the Department of Magistrate Services. The Virginia magistrate system cannot go another 10+ years without specific pay increases.

The Virginia Magistrates Association continues to advocate for differentials for magistrates who work atypical shifts and are entrusted with the additional duty and responsibility for being a certified magistrate trainer. “Magistrates are essential employees and work varied shifts including weekends, holidays, and night shifts. This is vastly different from any other profession in the Virginia Judiciary. Magistrates ensure the safety of the public and integrity of the judicial branch even during non-typical work hours. Working atypical hours such as overnight hours is a sacrifice in many ways and is done with grace and duty in mind. We request that a monetary differential is granted to magistrate who work these hours. Magistrates who are designated certified magistrate trainers receive should also receive additional compensation when performing their certified magistrate trainer duties. Certified magistrate trainers go through an 8-hour long training program and are entrusted with training new magistrates. When performing their duties, certified magistrate trainers are spending extra time completing documentation (daily observation report), communicating more frequently with their chief and are closely monitoring and assisting new magistrates. A magistrate would be compensated for only the time worked as a certified magistrate trainer or on night shift, rather than a permanent increase. A time and half differential rather than a percentage increase will account for rotating shifts and allow magistrates to continue to switch shifts as needed.”² Differential pay can be implemented using the new Cardinal system and would be subject to management’s approval, like additional pay.

Below is the Virginia Magistrates Association’s proposal

- All front-line magistrates should have their salaries raised to \$60,000 plus any applicable increase based on years of service as set forth in the chart below.
- Magistrates, Chief Magistrates and Magistrate Regional Supervisors receive continuous years of service increases at the below milestones.
- Magistrates, Chief Magistrates, and Magistrate Regional Supervisors who have twenty years of service or more receive an additional \$2,500.00 to their yearly salary upon implementation and then would be subject to the below milestone, years of service, increases.

Years of Service	Additional amount added to salary when the milestones are reached
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² Virginia Magistrates Association, Inc’s 2019 Magistrate Salary Increase Proposal Letter. May 19, 2019.

30 th year	\$3,500.00
20 th year	\$2,500.00
15 th year	\$500
10 th year	\$1,000.00
5 th year	\$500.00
3 rd year	\$1,000.00
up to 3 years	None

- All Chief Magistrates salaries are increased to a base amount of \$85,000.00.
- Magistrates working overnight shifts (10p-6a) receive a time-and-a-half shift differential, and
- Certified Magistrate Trainers receive a differential of time-and-a-half while performing training duties.

A report is due back to the Virginia General Assembly in October 2023, but we cannot wait until that time to act. The new salary structure can still be improved. Only with continuous, proactive measures will, we be able to defeat valid salary concerns and increase morale and retention.

The Virginia Magistrates Association request that salaries for employees in the Department of Magistrate Services are continually increased and that there are monetary benefits based on length of service, working alternative hours, and performing the task of training new magistrates. We understand this is a thoughtful process and request that the VMA, as one team with the Department of Magistrate Services and the Office of the Executive Secretary, are included in the deliberative process to develop and achieve the goals of obtaining additional monetary compensation and benefits for employees in the Department of Magistrate Services.

Respectfully submitted,

Avnel A. Coates, President
Virginia Magistrates Association, Inc.

cc: Sent via email to khade@vacourts.gov and jgreen@vacourts.gov