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May 25, 2012

The Honorable John W. Herron  
Administrative Judge  
First Judicial District of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas  
City Hall, Room 300  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Dear Judge Herron:

Certainly, the expeditious application of the administration of justice is an important and reachable goal for any court system.

However, it seems that in recent times there has been an imbalanced approach which denies full access to our courts for all parties. It appears that the administration of cases often takes precedence over substantive justice.

Arbitration, mediation, consolidation of discovery, and trials of cases can and do assist in the disposition of cases, but are not an end to themselves.

As nonpartisan data shows, the Philadelphia court system is not a hell hole, our juries are not crazed and our judges are fair. It is important for a fair and balanced approach to justice in Pennsylvania to continue our courts to be open, committed to following the rules in Pennsylvania and the United States Constitution.

To that end, punitive damages should not be different in any cases where these damages are recoverable. Discovery should be fair, impartial, and not be interpreted to benefit one side or the other.

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Mandatory mediation should be considered an anathema to a system of public justice. The costs attendant are onerous to everyday people to bear. Presently, the cost of trying a case in Philadelphia far exceeds costs in other counties and the federal system. I have attached analysis performed by this office of costs for costs associated with discovery disputes as well as the income levels related to those that could be most impacted.

It is important to hear all voices, and the plaintiff's bar stands ready to serve in this regard.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rhonda Hill Wilson".

Rhonda Hill Wilson

RHW:glc

Attachment

**FIVE-COUNTY PHILADELPHIA REGION DEMOGRAPHICS**

**I** **MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

County		Population
BUCKS	\$ 103,300	597,635
CHESTER	\$ 80,818	433,501
DELAWARE	\$ 88,380 <sup>1</sup>	550,864
MONTGOMERY	\$ 73,701 <sup>1</sup>	750,097
PHILADELPHIA	\$ 34,767 <sup>1</sup>	1,517,550

<sup>1</sup> Income estimates based on 2007 U. S. Census data

**II** **FILING FEES - CIVIL CASES**

	Commencement of Action at Law			
	or Equity	Llens	Petitlons	Subpoenas
BUCKS	\$205.75	\$20.25	\$205.25	\$3.50
CHESTER	\$154.30	\$35.00	\$153.80	\$4.00
DELAWARE	\$232.50	\$21.25	\$232.00	\$3.25
MONTGOMERY*	\$251.00	\$33.00	\$252.50	\$3.25
PHILADELPHIA**	\$564.42	\$83.94	\$52.68	\$7.70 ***
USDC****	\$350.00			

\* Fee for petitions are \$250.50/\$252.50; llens are \$29/\$33

\*\* Fee of \$11 for each additional defendant

\*\*\* Issuance of subpoena = \$7.70; producing response record to subpoena = \$66.22; prothy fee \$11/hr beyond 4-hour service or fraction thereof and \$.365 for each mile traveled for service out of county

\*\*\*\*Filing fee for miscellaneous case ls \$39.00

**III** **DISCOVERY MOTIONS COST**

BUCKS	No fee
CHESTER	No fee
DELAWARE	No fee
MONTGOMERY	No fee
PHILADELPHIA	\$52.68
USDC	

**IV** **DISCOVERY MASTERS - COST**

BUCKS	Court administration - no added fee	
CHESTER	Pre-trial office - no fee	
DELAWARE	Court administration - no added fee	
MONTGOMERY	Court administration - no added fee	
PHILADELPHIA	\$500.00 per hour (approx.)	[Nursing Home program mandated]
USDC	No added fee	