

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To: Iowa Legislature**

**From: Iowa Judicial Branch**

**Re: Interpreter Bill**

**Date: 11/30/2020**

This bill would authorize state court administration to pay all oral language court interpreters from judicial branch revolving fund established for payment of jury, witness, and court interpreter fees. Currently, oral language interpreters are paid by the following four sources depending on the case type and economic status of the person requiring an interpreter:

1. The State Public Defender (SPD) pays interpreters who work on behalf of indigent parties with limited-English proficiency (LEP) who are represented by assigned counsel in criminal and juvenile cases;
2. Local public defender field offices pay interpreters who work on behalf of indigent parties represented by public defenders in criminal and juvenile cases;
3. Counties pay oral language interpreters who assist LEP persons who are the subjects of mental health commitment proceedings; and
4. The state court administrator (SCA) pays interpreters appointed for LEP parties in all other cases.

This complex arrangement causes confusion among interpreters, court staff, and judges and leads to delays in payment processing. The proposed bill would streamline the payment of court interpreters.