

BRENNA BIRD
ATTORNEY GENERAL

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CHIEF DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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January 29, 2026

Kristi Onstot
Executive Secretary
Executive Council
State Capitol
L O C A L

Re: Request for Increase in Rates for Special Counsel – Tribal Land

Dear Kristi:

In 2024, we previously retained Special Counsel, Michael Marquess of Marquess & Hoyer Law Office, P.C., 203 W. High St., P.O. Box 51, Toledo, IA 52342 to represent the State of Iowa in criminal crimes committed when the offenses are committed by non-natives against non-natives (or without a victim) on the Sac and Fox Indian Settlement in Tama County.

Due to the increase in cases and costs, Mr. Marquess has requested to continue his services to a monthly rate of \$7,000.00 starting July 1st, 2026. His current rate is \$6,000.00 per month.

Here is some background on this request: A 1948 act of Congress granted the State of Iowa jurisdiction over all criminal offenses committed on the Settlement. A recent act of Congress returned to tribal authorities the criminal jurisdiction of crimes committed on the Settlement by or against natives. The issue has become - who should bear the cost of prosecution of crimes committed by non-natives on the Settlement, which is considered a sovereign nation? Tama County officials believe the costs of bringing these criminal cases on behalf of the State of Iowa should be borne by the State of Iowa, not Tama County.

The Office believes alleged crimes committed by non-natives on the Settlement should be diligently prosecuted. In the interest of public safety and equal administration of justice, the Office agrees that it is appropriate to approve the fee increase from the General Fund.

Executive Council
January 29, 2026
Page 2

Please let me know if you have questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Blankinship", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steven Blankinship
Chief Deputy Attorney General