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Letter to the editor: Why do we need 2 more juvenile prosecutors?

Jul. 29, 2013 | 1 Comment



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The editorial pages of the Register have been filled recently with statements from the county attorney and local law enforcement accusing AMOS [A Metropolitan Organizing Strategy] of distorting and manipulating juvenile justice numbers. There has been no alarming increase in petition filings on juveniles, we have been told.

Ironically, as those arguments were being made, the 5th Judicial District (our local court district) has added a sixth juvenile judge to handle the increased caseload and the county attorney is now asking for more tax money to hire two more juvenile attorneys.

If there hasn't been any increase in petition filings, and if all our concerns about more kids in the courts are unfounded, why do we need a new juvenile judge and two more juvenile attorneys? Are we in the midst of a juvenile crime wave? Not according to the numbers we've been given on juvenile arrests.

Let's be better stewards of our tax dollars and find another way to use our limited tax resources to hold non-violent, non-repeat juvenile offenders accountable outside of our court system.

AMOS is urging everyone to attend the Polk County Board of Supervisors meeting on today at 9:30 a.m. to urge a no vote for the funding of two new juvenile attorney positions within the Polk County Attorney's Office. The meeting will take place in the board room in the Polk County Administration Building, 111 Court Ave.

—The Rev. Cameron Barr, Des Moines, AMOS Leadership Team

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