

State Bar of Wisconsin: Supports justice system budget requests

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Madison, WI – This week the Wisconsin State Public Defender and District Attorneys released their 2023-2025 fiscal requests, which include increases from previous year's funding levels.

In response, State Bar of Wisconsin President Margaret Hickey released this statement:

“Wisconsin’s Judicial System is at a critical point, one exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic on caseloads and the challenges of recruiting and keeping experienced staff in today’s tight labor market. The State Bar of Wisconsin supports funding for prosecutors and public defenders that is adequate to ensure the ethical, effective representation of both the public and defendants in criminal cases. The State Bar supports the State Public Defender’s Office and Wisconsin District Attorneys’ requests for increased funding to attract and retain experienced and talented public defenders and prosecutors and the staff needed to support this work.

“Of particular note is an increase in the rate paid to private attorneys who take cases assigned by the Public Defenders’ office. The Legislature took a step in the right direction by recognizing the importance of adequate reimbursement by increasing the rate to \$70 in the 2019-20 budget. Unfortunately, it simply wasn’t enough.

“The State Bar believes that increasing the private bar rate to an acceptable and adequate level will increase the pool of qualified attorneys willing to take private bar cases and make appointments more effective. Delays in our court system would decrease, costly appeals might be avoided and fewer victims would be re-victimized

by drawn out legal proceedings. The State Bar of Wisconsin firmly believes that our court system needs these fiscal investments and our attorney members look forward to working with the governor and legislature to incorporate these needs into the upcoming budget.”