

Kelli Thompson leaving post as state public defender

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Kelli Thompson is leaving her post as State Public Defender after leading the agency for the past 12 years.

The office late Friday announced Thompson's departure, effective Oct. 9. Thompson told WisPolitics in a text that she isn't leaving for another opportunity and is exploring what she will do next.

In her resignation letter, Thompson wrote the most recent budget "was by far the most remarkable in state history." It included pay increases for public defenders and a boost in the private bar rate to \$100 an hour after it had been \$40 less than three years ago. The daughter of former Gov. Tommy Thompson wrote that budget success and "the team in place to help guide the agency into the future" led her to believe "now is the time to take on new challenges and leave the agency in very capable hands."

Deputy State Public Defender Katie York will assume the role of acting State Public Defender while the agency board conducts a search for a permanent replacement.

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State Bar of Wisconsin Executive Director Larry J. Martin called Thompson's departure "a real loss for the state, the public and the legal community,"

See the State Public Defender release here.

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