



Wisconsin State Public Defender

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ISSUED: May 28, 2019
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Statement from State Public Defender Kelli Thompson regarding today's actions in the Joint Committee on Finance:

I sincerely thank the Joint Committee on Finance for its actions today to raise the nation's lowest hourly private bar rate. I very much appreciate that the Committee members as well as the Governor and our partners in the criminal justice budget coalition support the effort to address this issue, which is having severe repercussions on defendants, victims, counties, courts, and jails.

The current \$40 per hour reimbursement rate has had a crippling effect on our justice system. The State Public Defender's Office along with our justice system partners from all around Wisconsin have been very vocal about the impacts of the current rate and the need for a rate increase. I thank the Governor, legislators, and the many judges, prosecutors, private attorneys, citizens, and county boards who have taken the time to share their perspective as to the need for an increase.

Today's vote is to increase the rate to \$70 per hour effective January 1, 2020.

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