



# Wisconsin State Public Defender

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**Kelli S. Thompson**  
State Public Defender

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Deputy State  
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## Kelli Thompson to depart as State Public Defender

Leaves agency after 12 years as head

MADISON - Earlier today, State Public Defender Kelli Thompson informed the Public Defender Board of her plan to leave the agency effective October 9, 2023.

“It has been a privilege to serve as the Wisconsin State Public Defender. The role of public defender is critical to protecting the rights of clients and the principles of liberty, due process, and the rule of law. From my first job as a staff attorney in Milwaukee through the last 12 years of service as State Public Defender, it has been an honor to serve and provide representation to individuals,” said Thompson.

“With the significant new resources included in the most recent state budget, and investments in the ability to provide quality direct client representation, I feel that now is the time to hand over the reins to future leaders of the agency. I have the utmost confidence that the agency has the tools to continue facing the challenges and achieving success in the future.”

Public Defender Board Chair Jim Brennan thanked Thompson for her service. “Kelli has been a tireless advocate for the Public Defender’s office and the individual clients she represents. Under her leadership, we have seen ongoing success in fulfilling the mission to zealously represent clients, protect constitutional rights, and advocate for an effective and fair criminal justice system.”

Following Kelli’s departure, Deputy State Public Defender Katie York will assume the role of Acting State Public Defender while the Public Defender Board conducts a search to fill the position on a permanent basis.

A copy of Kelli’s letter can be found [here](#).

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