



Wisconsin State Public Defender

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Statement from State Public Defender Kelli Thompson on 2013-2015 State Budget

The 2013-2015 state budget signed by Governor Walker includes important provisions to assist the State Public Defender in fulfilling Wisconsin's constitutional responsibility to provide legal representation to the poor.

Pay progression for assistant state public defenders, assistant attorneys generals, and assistant district attorneys will address the retention issues facing each of these attorney groups.

In a complementary action, the general wage adjustment, announced as part of the compensation plan, will provide salary increases to our non-attorney staff in each year of the biennium.

The budget also mitigates the long-standing structural deficit in the private bar appropriation. This budget provision means that private attorneys will no longer have to wait months at the end of the two-year budget cycle to receive reimbursement for work they have already completed.

The additional expert funding recognizes the increase in the number and complexity of the difficult cases we handle. Finally, we thank the Governor for listening to the concerns expressed by the SPD as well as others in the criminal justice system with the proposed bail bondsmen program and for ultimately vetoing the provision.

The 2013-2015 budget puts the agency in a stronger position to serve the people of Wisconsin and the state's criminal justice system.