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To: Cullen, Andrew S
Subject: FW: July 2023 Quarterly Newsletter

From: Public Defender Commission <pdcom@subscriptions.in.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 5:49 PM
To: Pinkston, Jennifer <Jennifer.Pinkston@pdcom.in.gov>
Subject: July 2023 Quarterly Newsletter

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July 2023 Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 15, Issue 3



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Indiana Lawyer Shortage Worsens, Leading to

Delayed Justice and Unrepresented Defendants

The Commission has produced a comprehensive article outlining Indiana's current critical lawyer shortage and how it is creating significant problems for both the criminal justice system and the overall practice of public interest law.

This issue has also recently been reported on by the Evansville Courier & Press, the Indiana Lawyer, and the Indiana Citizen website. Those articles, along with new research and potential solutions, may be found by clicking the button below.

We hope this article provokes debate and solutions from Indiana's policymakers.



[Click here to learn more about the critical lawyer shortage in Indiana.](#)

Legislative Session Short on Solutions for Indiana's Assigned Counsel System

House & Senate Balk at Supporting Governor's Proposal to Return Misdemeanor Reimbursement Authority to Commission

In an exceedingly disappointing move, neither the Indiana House nor the Indiana Senate supported an effort by Governor Eric Holcomb to authorize the Commission to reimburse local public defense systems for costs associated with misdemeanor assigned counsel representation in the recently-adjourned session of Indiana's General Assembly.

Securing this authorization remains the Commission's most significant, unfulfilled public policy goal. Staff will be coming forward with a proposal to keep the focus on this issue at the September Commission meeting.

Legislation to Permit Public Defender Participation in Prosecuting Attorney Retirement Fund Killed by Senate Appropriations Committee

The Commission has partnered with the Chief PD Association and the PD Council to advocate for the creation of a PD Retirement Fund, similar to the fund currently available to prosecutors and judges.

The concept was unanimously endorsed by a Joint House/Senate Interim Committee known as the Pension Management Oversight Commission (PMOC) in the Summer of 2022. Subsequently, House Bill 1602 passed out of the House 94-1. It passed out of the Senate Pensions & Labor Committee 9-1. While the House fully funded the new proposal in its version of the State Budget, the Senate Appropriations Committee stripped the funding and did not grant the bill a hearing.

Questions about matters of public policy may be directed to [Andrew Cullen](#).

Key Updates: New Salaries, New Standard, New Commission Staffer, New State Representative

1. New Salaries:

The Chief Justice announced updated salaries for Judicial Officers and Prosecuting Attorneys. While these salaries are effective July 1, 2023, the Commission does not require local public defense systems to match the salaries until January 1, 2024, to allow for the county budget process.

Click [HERE](#) to read the salary adjustment letter from Chief Justice Loretta Rush to State Budget Director Zachary Jackson.



2. New Standard:

To address recent concerns raised about support staff parity with other county offices, the Commission has adopted Standard O. The standard permits local county public defender boards to require that "salaried public defender support staff receive the same salaries and compensation provided to the support staff in similar positions with similar experience within the prosecutor's office or elsewhere within the county."

As with all changes to the comprehensive plan, any changes made locally must be approved by the Commission. Counties and Regions are required to follow their comprehensive plans to continue to receive reimbursement by the state. A detailed explanation of this new standard may be found by reading the draft minutes from the June Commission meeting [HERE](#).

3. New Commission Staff:

The Commission has recently hired Tristan Snell as its Program Support Specialist. Mr. Snell is a native of Muncie and a recent graduate of Ball State University majoring in Business Information Technology. He currently resides in his hometown with his wife Andrea, and two sons Bennett and Calvin. When not serving the state of Indiana, Tristan enjoys cycling, and boating and fishing at his family's lake cottage in northern Indiana. Tristan may be reached by clicking [HERE](#).

4. New State Representative:

An attorney with current public defense contracts in both Scott and Jennings County has prevailed in a recent caucus election to fulfill the term of retired State Rep. Randy Frye from Indiana's 67th House District.

The Commission welcomes State Representative Alex Zimmerman. Click [HERE](#) to read reporting from Casey Smith at the Indiana Capital Chronicle about Indiana's newest member of the General Assembly.

Save the Date: Annual Training on September 29

The Commission's Annual training will be held Friday,



September 29, 2023.

Keep an eye on your inbox. Details and registration information will be arriving soon.

Local Public Defender Board Appointments

The Commission welcomes the following new or re-appointed members to local Public Defender Boards. Their 3-year terms were approved at the prior Commission meeting.

- Heather Schuh-Ogle, Brown
- Julie Schmitt, Spencer
- Bill Aspy, Blackford
- J. Scott Vanderbeck, LaGrange
- Lonnie Stroud, Orange

At the September meeting, the Commission will consider appointments to the following local boards:

- Decatur
- Owen
- Pulaski

If you have any questions about this or any matters regarding local public defender boards, contact [Andrew Cullen](#) or [Linda Hunter](#).

[Click here for more information regarding local boards.](#)

June Commission Meeting Draft Minutes

[Click here to read the draft minutes.](#)

Public Defense Employment Opportunities

[Click here for a list of current Public Defense Employment Opportunities.](#)

2023 Reimbursement Request Due Dates

Quarter	Reimbursement Request Due Date	Commission Meeting
2nd 2023	Monday, August 14	Wednesday, September 20
3rd 2023	Tuesday, November 14	Wednesday, December 13

Commission meetings begin at 2 p.m. Eastern and comply with the Indiana Open Door Law ([IC § 5-14-1.5](#)). Meetings are held at the Commission Office (309 W. Washington Street, Suite 501, Indianapolis, IN, 46204) unless otherwise stated on the meeting notice and agenda. The public is invited to attend in person or via electronic means permitted under [IC § 5-14-1.5-3.6](#) excluding any Executive Sessions that may be scheduled as permitted under [IC § 5-14-1.5-6.1](#). To view the Commission's Electronic Meeting Policy, click [here](#).

Notice of Executive Sessions & meetings will be posted at the entrance to the Commission Office (309 W. Washington Street, Suite 501, Indianapolis, IN, 46204) and will be posted on [the front page of the Commission's website under "News & Announcements"](#) at least 48 hours in advance. Meeting materials and agendas will be posted at least 24 hours in advance.

If you have any questions about the Commission meetings, contact [Derrick Mason](#).

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