



# Wisconsin State Public Defender

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## Statement from State Public Defender Kelli Thompson on the Governor's Budget

Governor Walker's budget for the State Public Defender contains some key provisions that address tangible needs of this agency. We are encouraged and heartened because these funded proposals will assist our agency in meeting Wisconsin's constitutional obligation to provide legal representation to the poor. The proposals also reflect Wisconsin's recognition of the importance of the right to counsel.

The Governor's budget includes a pay progression mechanism for our attorneys that will promote staff retention and will maintain parity and equity with assistant district attorneys. Pay progression will assist the agency in retaining experienced staff attorneys and help to ensure the rights of individuals are protected.

The Governor's budget also repairs a structural deficit in our private bar appropriation. Starting in the next budget cycle, our business partners in the private bar will no longer have to wait months and months to be paid for work they have already completed.

We thank the Governor for including these items in his budget proposal. The agency will continue to work with the administration and legislators as the budget moves forward in the process.

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