



Wisconsin State Public Defender

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Statement from State Public Defender Kelli Thompson on Assembly Republicans' announcement regarding criminal justice priorities for the 2019 biennial budget.

I would like to thank Representatives Loudenbeck and Born and their colleagues for their support of these vital criminal justice investments. Ensuring that the entire criminal justice system has the resources necessary to protect Wisconsin's communities and guarantee the protection of individual rights is vital to making sure that Wisconsin meets its constitutional obligations.

I am particularly thankful that part of the package includes an increase to the private bar rate of compensation. Considered the nation's lowest hourly rate, it has significant real world impacts not only for defendants, but for victims, courts, counties, and jails throughout Wisconsin. The low rate has led to a lack of private attorneys willing to accept appointments from the SPD. This means that people presumed innocent are detained for longer periods of time which, in turn, directly impacts county budgets. It also means delayed justice for victims of crime.

Support for these initiatives is significant and welcome. We look forward to continuing to work with our colleagues in the criminal justice system and policymakers as the budget is considered.

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