

SENATE BILL NO. 187

INTRODUCED BY J. SHOCKLEY

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING THE MONTANA PUBLIC DEFENDER ACT AND RELATED STATUTES; RESTRICTING AND LIMITING CASELOAD LEVELS FOR THE CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER AND DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDERS; REQUIRING NOTARIZED AFFIDAVITS OF INDIGENCY; REVISING THE PROVISION FOR PAYMENT BY DEFENDANTS OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES; AMENDING SECTIONS 2-15-1028, 46-8-101, 46-8-113, 46-18-251, 47-1-102, 47-1-105, 47-1-111, 47-1-202, ~~AND 47-1-205, 47-1-215, AND 47-1-216~~, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

(Refer to Introduced Bill)

Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert:

**Section 1.** Section 2-15-1028, MCA, is amended to read:

**"2-15-1028. Public defender commission.** (1) There is a public defender commission.

(2) The commission consists of 44 seven members appointed by the governor as follows:

(a) two attorneys from nominees submitted by the chief justice of the supreme court;

(b) three attorneys from nominees submitted by the president of the state bar of Montana, ~~as follows:~~

~~—— (i) one attorney experienced in the defense of felonies who has served a minimum of 1 year as a full-time public defender;~~

~~—— (ii) one attorney of whom must be experienced in the defense of juvenile delinquency and abuse and neglect cases involving the federal Indian Child Welfare Act; and~~

~~—— (iii) one attorney who represents criminal defense lawyers;~~

(c) two members of the general public who are not attorneys or judges, active or retired, as follows:

(i) one member from nominees submitted by the president of the senate; and

(ii) one member from nominees submitted by the speaker of the house; ~~and~~

~~—— (d) one person who is a member of an organization that advocates on behalf of indigent persons;~~

~~—— (e) one person who is a member of an organization that advocates on behalf of a racial minority population in Montana;~~



1 ~~—— (f) one person who is a member of an organization that advocates on behalf of people with mental illness~~  
 2 ~~and developmental disabilities; and~~

3 ~~—— (g) one person who is employed by an organization that provides addictive behavior counseling.~~

4 ~~—— (3) A person appointed to the commission must have significant experience in the defense of criminal~~  
 5 ~~or other cases subject to the provisions of Title 47, chapter 1, or must have demonstrated a strong commitment~~  
 6 ~~to quality representation of indigent defendants.~~

7 (3) At least one member must have specific knowledge of Indian culture AND AT LEAST ONE MEMBER MUST  
 8 HAVE A BACKGROUND IN THE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS.

9 (4) A vacancy on the commission must be filled in the same manner as the original appointment and in  
 10 a timely manner.

11 (5) Members shall serve staggered 3-year terms.

12 (6) The commission is allocated to the department of administration for administrative purposes only,  
 13 as provided in 2-15-121, except that:

14 (a) the commission shall hire staff for the commission and the chief public defender shall hire ~~their own~~  
 15 separate staff for the office, except for any support staff provided by the department of administration for  
 16 centralized services, such as payroll, human resources, accounting, information technology, or other services  
 17 determined by the commission and the department to be more efficiently provided by the department; and

18 (b) commission and office of state public defender budget requests prepared and presented to the  
 19 legislature and the governor in accordance with 17-7-111 must be prepared and presented independently of the  
 20 department of administration. However, nothing in this subsection (6)(b) prohibits the department from providing  
 21 administrative support for the budgeting process and including the budget requests in appropriate sections of the  
 22 department's budget requests for administratively attached agencies.

23 (7) While serving a term on the commission, a member of the commission may not serve as a judge, a  
 24 public defender employed by or under contract with the office of state public defender established in 47-1-201,  
 25 a county attorney or a deputy county attorney, the attorney general or an assistant attorney general, the United  
 26 States district attorney or an assistant United States district attorney, or a law enforcement official.

27 (8) Members of the commission may not receive a salary for service on the commission but must be  
 28 reimbursed for expenses, as provided in 2-18-501 through 2-18-503, while actually engaged in the discharge of  
 29 official duties.

30 (9) The commission shall establish procedures for the conduct of its affairs and elect a presiding officer

1 from among its members."  
2

3 **Section 2.** Section 46-8-101, MCA, is amended to read:

4 **"46-8-101. Right to counsel.** (1) During the initial appearance before the court, every defendant must  
5 be informed of the right to have counsel and must be asked if the aid of counsel is desired.

6 (2) ~~If Except as provided in subsection (3), if~~ the defendant desires assigned counsel because of  
7 financial inability to retain private counsel and the offense charged is a felony or the offense is a misdemeanor  
8 and incarceration is a sentencing option if the defendant is convicted, the court shall order the office of state  
9 public defender, provided for in 47-1-201, to assign counsel to represent the defendant without unnecessary delay  
10 pending a determination of eligibility under the provisions of 47-1-111.

11 (3) If the defendant desires assigned counsel because of financial inability to retain private counsel and  
12 the offense charged is a misdemeanor and incarceration is a sentencing option if the defendant is convicted,  
13 during the initial appearance the court may order that incarceration not be exercised as a sentencing option if the  
14 defendant is convicted. If the court so orders, the court shall inform the defendant that the assistance of counsel  
15 at public expense through the office of state public defender is not available and that time will be given to consult  
16 with an attorney before a plea is entered. If incarceration is waived as a sentencing option, a public defender may  
17 not be assigned."  
18

19 **Section 3.** Section 46-8-113, MCA, is amended to read:

20 **"46-8-113. Payment by defendant for assigned counsel -- costs to be filed with court.** (1) As part  
21 of or as a condition under a sentence imposed under the provisions of this title, the court shall require a convicted  
22 defendant to pay the costs of counsel assigned to represent the defendant as follows, except as provided in  
23 subsections (2) and (3):

24 (a) in every misdemeanor case, ~~\$150~~ attorney fees at the rate of \$75 an hour; and

25 (b) in every felony case, ~~\$500~~ attorney fees at the rate of \$75 an hour.

26 (2) Costs must be limited to costs incurred by the office of state public defender, provided for in 47-1-201,  
27 for providing the defendant with counsel in the criminal proceeding. If the criminal proceeding includes a jury trial  
28 or a justice's court trial, counsel assigned by the office of state public defender shall file with the court a statement  
29 of the hours spent on the case and the costs and expenses incurred and, except as provided in subsection (3),  
30 the court shall require the defendant to pay the costs of counsel and other costs and expenses as reflected in

1 the statement. The defendant is also responsible for the cost of counsel and expenses incurred in preparing for  
2 or completing an appeal.

3 (3) The court may not sentence a defendant to pay the costs for assigned counsel unless the defendant  
4 is or will be able to pay them. In determining the amount and method of payment of costs, the court shall take into  
5 account the financial resources of the defendant and the nature of the burden that payment of costs will impose.

6 (4) A defendant who has been sentenced to pay costs may at any time petition the court that sentenced  
7 the defendant for remission of the payment of costs or of any unpaid portion of the costs. If it appears to the  
8 satisfaction of the court that payment of the amount due will impose manifest hardship on the defendant or the  
9 defendant's immediate family, the court may remit all or part of the amount due in costs or modify the method of  
10 payment.

11 (5) Costs of counsel imposed under this section must be included in the court's judgment.

12 ~~(6) (a) In addition to other methods of payment, the court may order forfeiture and sale of the offender's~~  
13 ~~assets under the provisions of Title 25, chapter 13, part 7, unless the court finds, after notice and an opportunity~~  
14 ~~for the offender to be heard, that the assets are reasonably necessary for the offender to sustain a living or~~  
15 ~~support the offender's dependents or unless the state determines that the cost of forfeiture and sale would~~  
16 ~~outweigh the amount available to the office of the state public defender after sale. If the proceeds of sale exceed~~  
17 ~~the amount of payment ordered and the costs of forfeiture and sale, any remaining amount must be returned to~~  
18 ~~the offender.~~

19 ~~(b) After a prosecution is commenced and upon petition of the prosecutor, the court may grant a~~  
20 ~~restraining order or injunction, require a satisfactory bond, or take other action if the court finds that the restraining~~  
21 ~~order or injunction, bond, or other action is necessary to preserve property or assets that could be used to satisfy~~  
22 ~~an anticipated payment obligation. A hearing must be held on the petition, and any person with an interest in the~~  
23 ~~property is entitled to be heard.~~

24 ~~(7)(6) For a felony offense:~~

25 ~~(a) during any period that the offender is incarcerated, the department of corrections shall take a~~  
26 ~~percentage, as set by department rule, of any money in any account of the defendant administered by the~~  
27 ~~department and use the money to satisfy any existing payment obligation to the office of the state public defender;~~

28 ~~(b) at the beginning of any period during which the offender is not incarcerated, the offender shall sign~~  
29 ~~a statement allowing any employer of the offender to garnish up to 25% of the offender's compensation and give~~  
30 ~~the garnished amounts to the department of corrections to be used by the department to satisfy any existing~~

1 ~~payment obligation; and~~

2 ~~(c)(B) during any period that the defendant is on probation or parole, the probation and parole officer shall~~  
3 ~~set a monthly payment amount to be paid.~~

4 ~~(8)(7) The department of corrections shall give the department of revenue a copy of the COURT order to~~  
5 ~~make payments to the office of the state public defender. If full payment has not been made, the department of~~  
6 ~~revenue shall intercept any state tax refunds and any federal tax refunds, as provided by law, due the offender~~  
7 ~~and transfer the money to the department of corrections for a felony offense and to the sentencing court for a~~  
8 ~~misdemeanor offense for disbursement to the office of the state public defender. The department of revenue may~~  
9 ~~charge the department of corrections a fee to recover its costs of intercepting a tax refund. The fee may not~~  
10 ~~exceed the amount charged a state agency for debt collection services under Title 17, chapter 4.~~

11 ~~(9)(8) As provided in 46-18-201, a sentencing court shall, as part of the sentence, require an offender~~  
12 ~~to fully compensate the office of state public defender STATE for the costs of counsel. The duty to pay the costs~~  
13 ~~of counsel under the sentence remains with the offender or the offender's estate until full payment is made,~~  
14 ~~whether or not the offender is under state supervision. If the offender is under state supervision, payment of costs~~  
15 ~~of counsel is a condition of any probation or parole.~~

16 ~~(10)(9) (a) The offender shall pay the cost of supervising the payment of costs of counsel by paying an~~  
17 ~~amount equal to 10% of the costs of counsel, but not less than \$5.~~

18 ~~(b) A felony offender shall pay the restitution and cost of supervising the payment of costs of counsel~~  
19 ~~to the department of corrections until the offender has fully paid the costs of counsel and the cost of supervising~~  
20 ~~the payment of costs of counsel. The department shall pay the costs of counsel to the office of state public~~  
21 ~~defender. ALL FUNDS COLLECTED MUST BE DEPOSITED IN THE STATE GENERAL FUND. The department may contract~~  
22 ~~with a government agency or private entity for the collection of the payments for costs of counsel and the cost~~  
23 ~~of collecting the payments for costs of counsel during the period following state supervision or state custody of~~  
24 ~~the offender. The department shall adopt rules to implement this subsection (10)(b) (9)(B).~~

25 ~~(c) In a misdemeanor case, payment of costs of counsel and of the cost of supervising the payment of~~  
26 ~~costs of counsel must be made to the court until the offender has fully paid the costs of counsel and the cost of~~  
27 ~~supervising the payment of costs of counsel. The court shall disburse the money to the entity employing the~~  
28 ~~person ordered to supervise costs of counsel, which shall disburse the costs of counsel to the office of state~~  
29 ~~public defender. ALL FUNDS COLLECTED MUST BE DEPOSITED IN THE STATE GENERAL FUND.~~

30 ~~(11)(10) If at any time the court finds that, because of circumstances beyond the offender's control, the~~

1 offender is not able to pay the costs of counsel, the court may order the offender to perform community service  
 2 during the time that the offender is unable to pay. The offender must be given a credit against costs of counsel  
 3 due at the rate of the hours of community service times the state minimum wage in effect at the time that the  
 4 community service is performed."

5

6 **SECTION 4. SECTION 46-18-251, MCA, IS AMENDED TO READ:**

7 **"46-18-251. (Temporary) Allocation of fines, costs, restitution, and other charges.** (1) Except as  
 8 provided in 46-18-236(7)(b), if a misdemeanor offender is subjected to any combination of fines, costs, restitution,  
 9 charges, or other payments arising out of the same criminal proceeding, money that the court collects from the  
 10 offender must be allocated as provided in this section. A felony offender shall pay restitution and costs of counsel  
 11 imposed pursuant to 46-8-113 to the department of corrections, and other fines and costs must be paid to the  
 12 court and allocated as provided in this section.

13 (2) Except as otherwise provided in 46-18-236(7)(b) and this section, if a defendant is subject to payment  
 14 of restitution and any combination of fines, costs, charges under the provisions of 46-18-236, or other payments,  
 15 50% of all money collected from the defendant must be applied to payment of restitution and the balance must  
 16 be applied to other payments in the following order:

- 17 (a) payment of charges imposed pursuant to 46-8-113;  
 18 ~~(a)~~(b) payment of charges imposed pursuant to 46-18-236;  
 19 ~~(b)~~(c) payment of supervisory fees imposed pursuant to 46-23-1031;  
 20 ~~(c)~~(d) payment of costs imposed pursuant to 46-18-232 or 46-18-233;  
 21 ~~(d)~~(e) payment of fines imposed pursuant to 46-18-231 or 46-18-233; and  
 22 ~~(e)~~(f) any other payments ordered by the court.

23 (3) The money applied under subsection (2) to the payment of restitution must be paid in the following  
 24 order:

- 25 (a) to the victim until the victim's unreimbursed pecuniary loss is satisfied;  
 26 (b) to the crime victims compensation and assistance program in the department of justice for deposit  
 27 in the account provided for in 53-9-113 until the state is fully reimbursed for compensation to the victim provided  
 28 pursuant to Title 53, chapter 9, part 1;  
 29 (c) to any other government agency that has compensated the victim for the victim's pecuniary loss; and  
 30 (d) to any insurance company that has compensated the victim for the victim's pecuniary loss.

1 (4) If any fines, costs, charges, or other payments remain unpaid after all of the restitution has been paid,  
 2 any additional money collected must be applied to payment of those fines, costs, charges, or other payments.  
 3 If any restitution remains unpaid after all of the fines, costs, charges, or other payments have been paid, any  
 4 additional money collected must be applied toward payment of the restitution. (Terminates June 30, 2015--sec.  
 5 14, Ch. 374, L. 2009.)

6 **46-18-251. (Effective July 1, 2015) Allocation of fines, costs, restitution, and other charges. (1)**  
 7 Except as provided in 46-18-236(7)(b), if an offender is subjected to any combination of fines, costs, restitution,  
 8 charges, or other payments arising out of the same criminal proceeding, money collected from the offender must  
 9 be allocated as provided in this section.

10 (2) Except as otherwise provided in 46-18-236(7)(b) and this section, if a defendant is subject to payment  
 11 of restitution and any combination of fines, costs, charges under the provisions of 46-18-236, or other payments,  
 12 50% of all money collected from the defendant must be applied to payment of restitution and the balance must  
 13 be applied to other payments in the following order:

- 14 (a) payment of charges imposed pursuant to 46-8-113;  
 15 ~~(a)~~(b) payment of charges imposed pursuant to 46-18-236;  
 16 ~~(b)~~(c) payment of supervisory fees imposed pursuant to 46-23-1031;  
 17 ~~(c)~~(d) payment of costs imposed pursuant to 46-18-232 or 46-18-233;  
 18 ~~(d)~~(e) payment of fines imposed pursuant to 46-18-231 or 46-18-233; and  
 19 ~~(e)~~(f) any other payments ordered by the court.

20 (3) The money applied under subsection (2) to the payment of restitution must be paid in the following  
 21 order:

- 22 (a) to the victim until the victim's unreimbursed pecuniary loss is satisfied;  
 23 (b) to the crime victims compensation and assistance program in the department of justice for deposit  
 24 in the state general fund until the state is fully reimbursed for compensation to the victim provided pursuant to Title  
 25 53, chapter 9, part 1;  
 26 (c) to any other government agency that has compensated the victim for the victim's pecuniary loss; and  
 27 (d) to any insurance company that has compensated the victim for the victim's pecuniary loss.

28 (4) If any fines, costs, charges, or other payments remain unpaid after all of the restitution has been paid,  
 29 any additional money collected must be applied to payment of those fines, costs, charges, or other payments.  
 30 If any restitution remains unpaid after all of the fines, costs, charges, or other payments have been paid, any

1 additional money collected must be applied toward payment of the restitution."  
2

3 **Section 5.** Section 47-1-102, MCA, is amended to read:

4 **"47-1-102. Purpose.** The purposes of this chapter are to:

5 (1) establish a statewide public defender system to provide effective assistance of counsel to indigent  
6 criminal defendants and other persons in civil cases who are entitled by law to assistance of counsel at public  
7 expense;

8 (2) ensure that the system is free from undue political interference and conflicts of interest;

9 (3) provide that public defender services are delivered by qualified and competent counsel in a manner  
10 that is fair and consistent throughout the state;

11 (4) establish a system that utilizes state employees, contracted services, or other methods of providing  
12 services in a manner that is responsive to and respective of regional and community needs and interests; ~~and~~

13 (5) ensure that adequate public funding of the statewide public defender system is provided and  
14 managed in a fiscally responsible manner; ~~and~~

15 (6) ensure that clients of the statewide public defender system pay reasonable costs for services  
16 provided by the system based on the clients' financial ability to pay."  
17

18 **Section 6.** Section 47-1-105, MCA, is amended to read:

19 **"47-1-105. Commission -- duties -- report -- rules.** The commission shall supervise and direct the  
20 system. In addition to other duties assigned pursuant to this chapter, the commission shall:

21 (1) establish the qualifications, duties, and compensation of the chief public defender, as provided in  
22 47-1-201, appoint a chief public defender after considering qualified applicants, and regularly evaluate the  
23 performance of the chief public defender;

24 (2) establish statewide standards for the qualification and training of attorneys providing public defender  
25 services to ensure that services are provided by competent counsel and in a manner that is fair and consistent  
26 throughout the state. The standards must take into consideration:

27 (a) the level of education and experience that is necessary to competently handle certain cases and case  
28 types, such as criminal, juvenile, abuse and neglect, civil commitment, capital, and other case types in order to  
29 provide effective assistance of counsel;

30 (b) acceptable caseloads and workload monitoring protocols to ensure that public defender workloads



1 are manageable;

2 (c) access to and use of necessary professional services, such as paralegal, investigator, and other  
3 services that may be required to support a public defender in a case;

4 (d) continuing education requirements for public defenders and support staff;

5 (e) practice standards;

6 (f) performance criteria; and

7 (g) performance evaluation protocols.

8 (3) review and approve the strategic plan and budget proposals submitted by the chief public defender  
9 and the administrative director;

10 (4) review and approve any proposal to create permanent staff positions;

11 ~~—— (5) establish policies and procedures for identifying cases in which public defenders may have a conflict  
12 of interest and for ensuring that cases involving a conflict of interest are handled according to professional ethical  
13 standards;~~

14 (5) establish and oversee a conflicts office with a conflicts manager responsible for conflicts of interest  
15 and for ensuring that cases involving a conflict of interest are handled according to professional ethical standards;

16 (6) establish policies and procedures for handling excess caseloads;

17 (7) establish policies and procedures to ensure that detailed expenditure and caseload data is collected,  
18 recorded, and reported to support strategic planning efforts for the system;

19 (8) adopt administrative rules pursuant to the Montana Administrative Procedure Act to implement the  
20 provisions of this chapter; and

21 (9) submit a biennial report to the governor, the supreme court, and the legislature, as provided in  
22 5-11-210. Each interim, the commission shall also specifically report to the law and justice interim committee  
23 established pursuant to 5-5-202 and 5-5-226. The report must cover the preceding biennium and include:

24 (a) all policies or procedures in effect for the operation and administration of the statewide public  
25 defender system;

26 (b) all standards established or being considered by the commission or the chief public defender;

27 (c) the number of deputy public defenders and the region supervised by each;

28 (d) the number of public defenders employed or contracted with in the system, identified by region;

29 (e) the number of attorney and nonattorney staff supervised by each deputy public defender;

30 (f) the number of new cases in which counsel was assigned to represent a party, identified by region,

1 court, and case type;

2 (g) the total number of persons represented by the office, identified by region, court, and case type;

3 (h) the annual caseload and workload of each public defender, identified by region, court, and case type,

4 except for the offices of chief public defender and deputy public defender;

5 (i) the training programs conducted by the office and the number of attorney and nonattorney staff who  
6 attended each program;

7 (j) the continuing education courses on criminal defense or criminal procedure attended by each public  
8 defender employed or contracted with in the system; and

9 (k) detailed expenditure data by court and case type."

10

11 **Section 7.** Section 47-1-111, MCA, is amended to read:

12 **"47-1-111. Eligibility -- determination of indigence -- rules.** (1) (a) When a court orders the office to  
13 assign counsel, the office shall immediately assign counsel prior to a determination under this section.

14 (b) If the person for whom counsel has been assigned is later determined pursuant to this section to be  
15 ineligible for public defender services, the office shall immediately notify the court so that the court's order may  
16 be rescinded.

17 (c) A person for whom counsel is assigned is entitled to the full benefit of public defender services until  
18 the court's order requiring the assignment is rescinded.

19 (d) Any determination pursuant to this section is subject to the review and approval of the court. The  
20 propriety of an assignment of counsel by the office is subject to inquiry by the court, and the court may deny an  
21 assignment.

22 (2) (a) An applicant who is eligible for a public defender ~~only~~ because the applicant is indigent shall also  
23 provide a detailed financial statement and sign an affidavit. The court shall advise the defendant that the  
24 defendant is subject to criminal charges for any false statement made on the financial statement.

25 (b) The application, financial statement, and affidavit must be on a form prescribed by the commission.  
26 The affidavit must clearly state that it is signed under the penalty of perjury and that a false statement may be  
27 prosecuted. The judge may inquire into the truth of the information contained in the affidavit.

28 (c) Information disclosed in the application, financial statement, or affidavit is not admissible in a civil or  
29 criminal action except when offered for impeachment purposes or in a subsequent prosecution of the applicant  
30 for perjury or false swearing.

1 (d) The office may not withhold the timely provision of public defender services for delay or failure to fill  
 2 out an application. However, a court may find a person in civil contempt of court for a person's unreasonable  
 3 delay or failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection (2).

4 (3) An applicant is indigent if:

5 (a) the applicant's gross household income, as defined in 15-30-2337, is at or less than 133% of the  
 6 poverty level set according to the most current federal poverty guidelines updated periodically in the Federal  
 7 Register by the United States department of health and human services under the authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2);

8 or

9 (b) the disposable income and assets of the applicant and the members of the applicant's household are  
 10 insufficient to retain competent private counsel without substantial hardship to the applicant or the members of  
 11 the applicant's household.

12 (4) A determination of indigence may not be denied based solely on an applicant's ability to post bail or  
 13 solely because the applicant is employed.

14 (5) A determination may be modified by the office or the court if additional information becomes available  
 15 or if the applicant's financial circumstances change.

16 (6) The commission shall establish procedures and adopt rules to implement this section. Commission  
 17 procedures and rules:

18 (a) must ensure that the eligibility determination process is fair and consistent statewide;

19 (b) must allow a qualified private attorney to represent an applicant if the attorney agrees to accept from  
 20 the applicant a compensation rate that will not constitute a substantial financial hardship to the applicant or the  
 21 members of the applicant's household;

22 (c) may provide for the use of other public or private agencies or contractors to conduct eligibility  
 23 screening under this section;

24 (d) must avoid unnecessary duplication of processes; and

25 (e) must prohibit individual public defenders from performing eligibility screening pursuant to this section."  
 26

27 **Section 8.** Section 47-1-202, MCA, is amended to read:

28 **"47-1-202. Chief public defender -- duties.** (1) In addition to the duties provided in 47-1-201, the chief  
 29 public defender shall:

30 ~~—— (1) act as secretary to the commission and provide administrative staff support to the commission;~~

- 1           ~~(2)~~(a) assist the commission in establishing the state system and establishing the standards, policies,  
2 and procedures required pursuant to this chapter;
- 3           ~~(3)~~(b) develop and present for the commission's approval a regional strategic plan for the delivery of  
4 public defender services;
- 5           ~~(4)~~ establish processes and procedures to ensure that when a case that is assigned to the office  
6 presents a conflict of interest for a public defender, the conflict is identified and handled appropriately and  
7 ethically;
- 8           ~~(5)~~(c) establish processes and procedures to ensure that office and contract personnel use information  
9 technology and caseload management systems so that detailed expenditure and caseload data is accurately  
10 collected, recorded, and reported;
- 11           ~~(6)~~(d) establish administrative management procedures for regional offices;
- 12           ~~(7)~~(e) establish procedures for managing caseloads and assigning cases in a manner that ensures that  
13 public defenders are assigned cases according to experience, training, and manageable caseloads and taking  
14 into account case complexity, the severity of charges and potential punishments, and the legal skills required to  
15 provide effective assistance of counsel;
- 16           ~~(8)~~(f) establish policies and procedures for assigning counsel in capital cases that are consistent with  
17 standards issued by the Montana supreme court for counsel for indigent persons in capital cases;
- 18           ~~(9)~~(g) establish and supervise a training and performance evaluation program for attorneys and  
19 nonattorney staff members and contractors;
- 20           ~~(10)~~(h) establish procedures to handle complaints about public defender performance and to ensure that  
21 public defenders, office personnel, and clients are aware of avenues available for bringing a complaint and that  
22 office procedures do not conflict with the disciplinary jurisdiction of the supreme court and the rules promulgated  
23 pursuant to Article VII, section 2, of the Montana constitution and the applicable provisions of Title 37, chapter  
24 61;
- 25           ~~(11)~~ maintain a minimum client caseload, as determined by the commission;
- 26           ~~(12)~~(i) actively seek gifts, grants, and donations that may be available through the federal government  
27 or other sources to help fund the system; and
- 28           ~~(13)~~(j) perform all other duties assigned by the commission pursuant to this chapter.
- 29           (2) The chief public defender may not maintain a client caseload."
- 30

1           **Section 9.** Section 47-1-205, MCA, is amended to read:

2           **"47-1-205. Office of appellate defender -- chief appellate defender.** (1) There is within the office an  
3 office of appellate defender. The office of appellate defender must be located in Helena, Montana.

4           (2) Beginning July 1, 2006, the chief public defender shall hire and supervise a chief appellate defender  
5 to manage and supervise the office of appellate defender.

6           (3) The chief appellate defender shall:

7           (a) manage and supervise all public defender services provided by the office of appellate defender;

8           (b) ensure that when a court orders the office to assign an appellate lawyer or when a defendant or  
9 petitioner is otherwise entitled to an appellate public defender, the assignment is made promptly to a qualified  
10 and appropriate appellate defender who is immediately available to the defendant or petitioner when necessary;

11           (c) ensure that appellate defender assignments comply with the provisions of 47-1-202~~(7)~~(1)(e) and  
12 standards for counsel for indigent persons in capital cases issued by the Montana supreme court;

13           (d) hire and supervise the work of office of appellate defender personnel as authorized by the appellate  
14 defender;

15           (e) contract for services as provided in 47-1-216 and as authorized by the chief public defender  
16 according to the strategic plan for the delivery of public defender services;

17           (f) keep a record of appellate defender services and expenses of the appellate defender office and  
18 submit records and reports to the chief public defender as requested;

19           (g) implement standards and procedures established by the commission and the chief public defender  
20 for the office of appellate defender;

21           (h) maintain a minimum client caseload as determined by the chief public defender; and

22           (i) perform all other duties assigned to the chief appellate defender by the chief public defender."  
23

24           **Section 10.** Section 47-1-215, MCA, is amended to read:

25           **"47-1-215. Regional offices -- deputy public defenders -- office space.** (1) ~~Beginning July 1, 2006,~~  
26 ~~the~~ The chief public defender shall hire, assign, and supervise a deputy public defender to manage and supervise  
27 each regional office established pursuant to 47-1-104(2).

28           (2) Each deputy public defender shall:

29           (a) manage and supervise all public defender services provided within the deputy public defender's  
30 assigned region;

1 (b) establish protocols so that when a court orders the office to assign counsel, the assignment is made  
 2 promptly to an appropriate public defender and so that a public defender is immediately available when  
 3 necessary;

4 (c) ensure that public defender assignments within the region comply with the provisions of  
 5 47-1-202~~(7)~~(1)(e);

6 (d) hire and supervise the work of regional office personnel as authorized by the chief public defender;

7 (e) contract for services as provided in 47-1-216 and authorized by the chief public defender according  
 8 to the strategic plan approved by the commission;

9 (f) keep a record of public defender and associated services and expenses in the region and submit the  
 10 records to the chief public defender as requested;

11 (g) implement the standards and procedures established by the commission and chief public defender  
 12 for the region; and

13 ~~—— (h) maintain a minimum client caseload as determined by the chief public defender; and~~

14 ~~(h)~~ perform all other duties as assigned by the chief public defender.

15 (3) Expenses for office space required for regional offices, including rent, utilities, and maintenance, must  
 16 be paid by the office and may not be considered a county or city obligation."

17

18 **Section 11.** Section 47-1-216, MCA, is amended to read:

19 **"47-1-216. Contracted services -- rules.** (1) The commission shall establish standards for a statewide  
 20 contracted services program that ensures that contracting for public defender services is done fairly and  
 21 consistently statewide and within each public defender region.

22 (2) The chief contract manager shall oversee the contracting program and may not maintain a client  
 23 caseload.

24 ~~(2)(3) Beginning July 1, 2006, the~~ The state office and each regional office, in a manner consistent with  
 25 statewide standards adopted by the commission pursuant to this section, may contract to provide public defender,  
 26 professional nonattorney, and other personal services necessary to deliver public defender services within each  
 27 public defender region. All contracting pursuant to this section is exempt from the Montana Procurement Act, as  
 28 provided in 18-4-132.

29 ~~(3)~~(4) Contracts may not be awarded based solely on the lowest bid or provide compensation to  
 30 contractors based solely on a fixed fee paid irrespective of the number of cases assigned.

1           ~~(4)~~(5) Contracting for public defender services must be done through a competitive process that must,  
2 at a minimum, involve the following considerations:

3           (a) attorney qualifications necessary to provide effective assistance of counsel that meets the standards  
4 established by the commission;

5           (b) attorney qualifications necessary to provide effective assistance of counsel that meet the standards  
6 issued by the Montana supreme court for counsel for indigent persons in capital cases;

7           (c) attorney access to support services, such as paralegal and investigator services;

8           (d) attorney caseload, including the amount of private practice engaged in outside the contract;

9           (e) reporting protocols and caseload monitoring processes;

10          (f) a process for the supervision and evaluation of performance;

11          (g) a process for conflict resolution; and

12          (h) continuing education requirements in accordance with standards set by the commission.

13          ~~(5)~~(6) The chief public defender and deputy public defenders shall provide for contract oversight and  
14 enforcement to ensure compliance with established standards.

15          ~~(6)~~(7) The commission shall adopt rules to establish reasonable compensation for attorneys contracted  
16 to provide public defender services and for others contracted to provide nonattorney services.

17          (8) Contract attorneys may not take any money or benefit from an appointed client or from anyone for  
18 the benefit of the appointed client.

19          (9) The commission shall limit the number of contract attorneys so that all contracted attorneys may be  
20 meaningfully evaluated.

21          (10) The commission shall implement rules requiring evaluation of every contract attorney on an annual  
22 basis by the chief contract manager based on written evaluation criteria."

23  
24          **NEW SECTION. Section 12. Conflicts of interest.** (1) The commission shall establish a conflicts office  
25 to contract for attorneys to represent indigent defendants in circumstances where, because of conflict of interest,  
26 the public defender program is unable to provide representation to a defendant.

27          (2) The commission shall appoint a conflicts manager to oversee the office. The conflicts manager  
28 reports directly to the commission and not to the chief public defender. The conflicts manager may not handle  
29 cases.

30          (3) All attorneys contracted for conflict of interest cases shall report to the conflicts manager.

