

Wis. Supreme Court Justices

Madison, Wis.

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CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
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SPD Private Bar pay rates

This letter is in response to your request (deadline of May 1, 2018) for input on the issue of Spd private bar pay rates. A public college 4 yr. degree costs an estimated \$60,000. The cost of a law school education at a public institution is \$75,000 for a total of \$135,000. Was the cost the same when you attended? Can you open an office with a secretary and a computer system and a web site and pay insurance and rent on a salary that includes representing public defender indigent clients at a pay rate of \$40.00 an hr. and \$25. 00 for travel? You cannot brake even on that amt. of pay and you would opt for other paying clients at \$150 to \$300 per hour. Public defender cases are often serious with liberty and jail or prison at stake and they involve a lot of anxiety, stress and preparation with individuals who suffer from disabilities and who come from dysfunctional families.

Circuit court judges regularly court appoint cases at the rate of \$40 per hr. for misdems and \$70 per hr. for felonies (northern wis.). A lot of those judges will pay \$125 to \$150 per hr depending whether anyone will take them or how serious they are.

These cases have literally become pro bono cases because the attorney is losing money taking them. Large firms do not want associates to take them because the firm incurs liability, loses money and depending on the nature of the case (sex assault/porn) may lose future business in the community.

Has the practice of law been reduced to a race to the bottom. The practice of law affects every aspect of society. Society cannot exist without the legal profession. What other profession (Dr.'s, Dentists, Trade unions, psychologists) encourage or engage in a race to the bottom for its members? All of us are lawyers who understand how difficult the practice of law is and how serious the consequences are for the clients and us (liability/ethical sanctions).

I request that you grant the petition and the relief sought because it is fundamentally fair and necessary to preserve a constitutional criminal justice system. I will thank you in advance.

4/18/2018

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