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Clerk of Supreme Court  
P.O. Box 1688  
Madison, WI 53701-1688

Re: Rule Petition 17-06, In re petition to amend SCR 81.02

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a solo practitioner who has been taking public defender and county appointed cases for the past ten years. I have a vested interest in this petition and I strongly support it.

The current rate for public defender and county appointed cases makes it very difficult to effectively practice law and maintain a business. Practicing criminal defense is a very rewarding yet very stressful career that I proudly do. Not only is the compensation rate embarrassingly low, the State Public Defender's Office takes three to four months to issue a check once a case has been closed and billed out. The significant lack of compensation and the untimely payment makes an already difficult job even more difficult to do.

It is even more frustrating when you work on a case for year or longer and an expert who is hired to do a few hours of work on the case is compensated twice or three times more than the attorney who handled the entire case. There are fewer and fewer attorneys and experts willing to put in the time and effort to represent and evaluate indigent clients.

I am well aware that this is a problem across the state because I have been consistently asked by various public defender offices to represent clients in counties that are up to 200 miles away. Clients are waiting in jail for months before an attorney can be appointed to represent them, because the Public Defender's Office struggles to find attorneys to take on the cases. The time is now to properly compensate attorneys who handle public defender and county appointed cases. I am very concerned of what further damage will happen to the Wisconsin judicial system if a change is not made.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Attorney Erika Amundson