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**From:** Christopher Paulsen  
**To:** Janto, Carrie; Bergum, Susan  
**Date:** 4/17/2018 1:21 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Comments regarding WACDL's Petition #17-06

>>> Jessie Weber <[jessie@jessieweberlaw.com](mailto:jessie@jessieweberlaw.com)> 4/17/2018 10:28 AM >>>

I wanted to take this time to write and express my strong support of the increase in the private bar hourly rate for Public Defender cases. I began practicing in 2004. I started off in private practice and then began working as a staff public defender in 2007 for 6 ½ years. I then left the SPD to go into private practice with a law firm. I am now working as a solo practitioner. I want to accept public defender appointments as I strongly believe in indigent criminal defense, but I cannot afford to do so at the current rate of \$40/hour. I am contacted by offices located in Sawyer, Barron, Buffalo, Burnett, Washburn, Marathon, Lincoln, Douglas, Price, Wood, Portage and Brown County to take cases. I cannot afford to drive to these locations at \$25/hour. These counties are desperate for lawyers--I often receive emails from these offices trying to appoint attorneys for over 20 different clients. I am also contacted by the Eau Claire office (my home county) also desperate for attorneys on a frequent basis. I would also like to draw attention to the fact that the current rate not only affects attorneys, but it severely affects clients and the court system. Judges are routinely forced to reschedule hearings because clients have not yet been appointed attorneys. Cases are delayed because of the attorney shortage. Competent, experienced, qualified attorneys just cannot afford to accept complicated serious cases at this rate. It is time that the rate is raised and qualified attorneys can continue taking cases and make a living wage. Thank you for your attention to this very important issue.

Jessie G. Weber  
Jessie Weber Law, L.L.C.  
307 S. Farwell St.  
Suite 201  
Eau Claire, WI 54701  
715-598-7737

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