

May 2, 2005

The Honorable Alan L. Cropsey
State Senator
State Capitol
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Re. Proposed Michigan Public Defense Act of 2005

Dear Senator Cropsey:

At its April 22, 2005 meeting, the State Bar of Michigan's Board of Commissioners again discussed the current environment under which legal counsel is assigned to individuals in the State of Michigan for public defense services. The State Bar has long recognized the need to examine the delivery of criminal defense services in the state and the parallel need to make recommendations to enhance and improve upon the present system. To this end, the Board of Commissioners reaffirmed action taken by the Representative Assembly in April of 2002 to adopt the eleven criminal defense assigned counsel guidelines for improving public defense services proposed by the Michigan Public Defense Task Force. Furthermore, the Board of Commissioners unanimously supported the State Bar's participation in the formulation of legislation that actualizes these principles.

I write not only to advise you of this recent development, but to commend you for your leadership in this area. We appreciate that as a member of the State Bar and an elected official you recognize the need for reform. We continue to stand ready to assist you and hope that we can be a resource to you in this endeavor. You may contact me directly at (517) 346-6375 or jwelch@mail.michbar.org.

Sincerely,

Janet Welch
General Counsel

CC. Nancy J. Diehl, President
Thomas W. Cranmer, President-Elect
Richard D. McLellan, Commissioner
Hon. Cynthia D. Stephens, Commissioner
John T. Berry, Executive Director
James Neuhard, State Appellate Defender Office