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Memorandum

To: Darcy Adcock, Director of Human Resources, Kristal Adams, Organizational Development and Compensation Manager
From: Gregory Ticsay, Lake County Public Defender
Date: December 10, 2025 (amended January 23, 2026)
Subject: Request for Two Additional Principal Public Defenders to Staff Consolidated Domestic Violence Courtroom T511

Introduction

The Courts have indicated they will be consolidating all felony Domestic Violence cases into Courtroom T511, alongside misdemeanor Domestic Violence matters, as early as May of 2026. The Public Defender represents roughly half of the criminal Domestic Violence matters. While this consolidation may streamline case management and promote consistency, it creates significant staffing challenges for the Public Defender's Office that must be addressed to ensure fair, effective and timely representation.

Current Staffing Structure

- Felony Domestic Violence cases are currently distributed across five felony courtrooms.
- The Courts, Circuit Clerk and Sheriff currently staff T511 on a daily basis, thus not requiring additional personnel.
- State's Attorney's Office: Each courtroom has one Principal State's Attorney dedicated to Domestic Violence cases. These attorneys can be reassigned to T511 without requiring additional personnel or disrupting case preparation.
- Public Defender's Office:
 - No attorneys are specifically designated for felony Domestic Violence cases.
 - 12 Principal Public Defenders handle Domestic Violence cases in addition to their broader felony caseloads.
 - Each attorney currently manages an average of 11 pending Domestic Violence cases, plus Petitions to Revoke.

Due to the substantial growth in our client population coupled with the expanded responsibilities imposed by the Pretrial Fairness Act, caseloads have outpaced the staffing growth within the office.

Impact of Consolidation

- Consolidating all felony Domestic Violence cases into T511 will create a new caseload of over 130 felony cases.
- Assigning this caseload to a single Principal Public Defender would be unmanageable.
- Reassigning existing attorneys from felony courtrooms is not feasible:
- Roughly 90% of their current caseloads are non-domestic cases.
- Removing one attorney would overload the remaining attorneys, delay case resolutions, and force representation to restart from scratch on reassigned cases.
- Current felony courtrooms already require the addition of 3-4 attorneys due to increased caseloads under the Pretrial Fairness Act which the office intends to address in the FY2027 budget.

Staffing Request

To ensure effective representation and maintain manageable workloads, the Public Defender's Office requests two additional Principal Public Defenders to staff Courtroom T511.

- Facilities: Existing office space, computers, and phone equipment are available to accommodate these additions.
- Caseload Benefits: Removing Domestic Violence cases from regular felony courtrooms will reduce caseloads by approximately 10%, improving efficiency and case resolution times.

Conclusion

The consolidation plan is administratively feasible for the State's Attorney's Office but requires the immediate addition of resources for the Public Defender's Office. Without two new Principal Public Defenders, the plan risks overwhelming attorneys, delaying justice, and undermining fair representation. With these additions, the plan will not only be workable but will also enhance overall efficiency across the current felony courtrooms. We respectfully request approval and funding for two additional Principal Public Defenders to staff Courtroom T511.