

1. I understand [HB 2467](#), also in Ways and Means, establishes a Public Defense Services Student Loan Repayment Assistance Program, through the Oregon State Bar, to provide forgivable loans to eligible public defense attorneys for outstanding student loans.
- Question: Is a similar loan repayment program being made available made to deputy district attorneys? District Attorneys and Deputy District Attorneys, like many public defense non-contract attorneys, are eligible for the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF). The PSLF Program forgives the remaining balance on your Direct Loans after an attorney has made 120 qualifying monthly payments under a qualifying repayment plan while working full-time for a qualifying employer. It's our understanding eligibility for this program is tied to your employer as a federal, state, local or tribal employee or not-for-profit organizations that are exempt under Section 501(c)(3). See more [here](#) and possible even broader eligibility for "Public interest law services: legal services provided by an organization that is funded in whole or in part by a local, state, federal, or tribal government." Unclear if HB 2467A would only be eligible to those contract public defenders not eligible for PSLF.
2. I hear and read frequently that there is a shortage of public defense lawyers in Oregon.

Question: How many lawyers are we paying to be prosecutors in Oregon and how many lawyers are we paying to be public defense attorneys? There is a total of 430 DDAs and DAs in the State. Of the 430 only the 36 elected DAs are paid directly by the state. The remaining are paid for by the counties. We would defer to PDSC about the number of public defense attorneys, but as reported in their presentation to the Public Safety Subcommittee on April 17, 2023 (deck [here](#)) Slide 19 there are:

By Contract Type:

Criminal: 526 Attorneys

Juvenile: 164 Attorneys (*Assume portion of these are dependency?)

Total: 690

By Contractor Type

Non-Profit: 264 Attorneys

Consortia: 343 Attorneys

Law Firms/Solo: 119 Attorneys

TOTAL: 726

District Attorney/Deputy District Attorney: 430

3. The proposal you are advocating for makes most public defense lawyers state employees, funded by the state.

Question: Is this same paradigm also being considered for deputy district attorneys to meet the stated goal of equalizing the pay and benefits for these lawyers all assigned to the same caseloads? ODAA has not taken a position (support or oppose) on the proposal to make public defense lawyers state employees. If there is a move to make all public defense attorneys state employees, your DAs and County partners would hope that part of the conversation includes similar and comparable investments in prosecution services to ensure both are able to adequately function.

Historically, the State did fund a portion of Deputy District Attorneys. Over the last few decades that number has continued to go down and today they fund 0% of Deputy District Attorneys.