

NO Forced Appointments By Judges

Judges shouldn't force a public defender to take a case even when the public defender says that they cannot ethically handle another case.

THIS SHORT-TERM FIX WILL DEEPEN THE CRISIS BECAUSE IT WILL DRIVE ATTORNEYS AWAY FROM PUBLIC DEFENSE.

The forced appointment process ineffectively utilizes attorneys and public defense funds, and is procedurally cumbersome and counterproductive.

FEB 25

Marion Co Presiding Judge sent email to public defenders saying forced appointments will start on March 1.

FEB 28

Marion Co Presiding Judge sent email saying that forced appointments will be delayed until March 5 or later as they work out the mechanics of the process.

Consortia and Law Firms

Consortia and law firms having been taking the majority of cases and they are at their max. The Legislature wants to eliminate their service model. And now Judges want to force the attorneys to take cases. Soon, they will realize that the sacrifice is not worth it and they will stop taking public defense cases.

Nonprofit PD Offices

Nonprofits train Oregon's next generation of public defenders. To do so, their attorneys need to have time to train and supervise. The newly licensed public defenders do not yet have the skill and experience to handle a high caseload and cannot be force appointed to cases.

Listen to Defenders

When an attorney attests that they cannot competently represent another client, and a judge force appoints them to a case, Oregon Judges are depriving Oregonians of their right to competent representation. With forced appointments, all clients of the lawyer are not getting proper representation because the attorney does not have adequate time to do what the attorney should for all clients.

MARION COUNTY JUDGES
FORCE APPOINTED
PUBLIC DEFENDERS IN

2023

NUMBER OF PUBLIC
DEFENDERS WHO
LEFT THE PRACTICE

13

AFTER FORCED
APPOINTMENTS

FORCED
APPOINTMENTS BY
THE COURT DROVE

60%

OF NONPROFIT PUBLIC
DEFENDERS AWAY IN
2023



Mae Lee Browning
Legislative Director

MLBrowning@ocdla.org
310-227-7659