



WAYNE COUNTY CRIMINAL DEFENSE BAR ASSOCIATION

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20-Year compensation impasse nearing an end for Wayne County defense attorneys

W.C.D.D.B.A. negotiates promising agreement with Circuit Court leadership

Detroit, MI – **Wayne County Criminal Defense Bar Association** President **Matthew M. Evans** announced today that negotiations have cleared the way for a settlement in a long-standing compensation impasse for his members. The agreement, reached with Wayne County Circuit Court Chief Judges **Mary Beth Kelly** and **Timothy M. Kenney**, will roll back a 10-percent cut implemented in 2001... and ultimately provide defense attorneys with their first compensation increase in more than 20 years

“Discussions are already underway,” Evans said, “toward creating an enhanced fee schedule for all attorneys who voluntarily choose to represent indigent clients in Wayne County. Our members are extremely pleased with the leadership demonstrated by our chief judges, and their determination to correct a significant imbalance in our criminal justice system.”

The *Michigan Constitution* requires that all criminal defendants be provided with competent legal representation. The Michigan Supreme Court has ruled that counties must provide fair and reasonable compensation for those providing this service. **W.C.C.D.B.A.** members serve in approximately 75% of Wayne County criminal cases in which defendants cannot afford legal representation.

“Defense attorneys serving in Oakland, Macomb, and virtually every other county in Michigan, face similar compensation inequities,” continued Evans. “Chief Judges Kelly and Kenney were willing to stand up for justice. Perhaps this will initiate progress in other parts of Michigan, where it is desperately needed.”

The Wayne County Circuit Court leadership is charged with making budget decisions, which are then forwarded to the County Board of Commissioners for final approval.

The **Wayne County Criminal Defense Bar Association (W.C.C.D.B.A.)** represents approximately one hundred (100) self-employed attorneys who serve the public and the criminal justice system by accepting the most serious and difficult indigent defense cases.

For more information about the **Wayne County Criminal Defense Bar Association**, or to arrange an interview with Matthew Evans or another WCCDBA member, please contact Tim Meloche of Delta Communications at 248.594.9430.