

Marla McCowan

From: Melissa Wangler <melissa@wanglerlaw.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2017 6:48 PM
To: Comments
Subject: Standard 7

Hello from Northern Michigan!

First,

Thank you to the commission for your hard work and dedication to improving indigent defense in our state! I know some of you personally, and I know how much passion and energy has gone into this endeavor. Thank you thank you thank you!

Although I appreciate what the commission is trying to accomplish, I do have concerns with Standard 7. The case-type qualifications focus more on quantity and not quality. I am entering my 5th year as an attorney. Thanks to my talented trial skills professors in law school, I very clearly understand that the trial decision belongs to the client, not the attorney. If the trial decision was mine to make, I may be closer to the numbers in the proposed qualifications! I have only one solo misdemeanor jury trial under my belt, but I have taken advantage of second chair opportunities when they have been available, and I'm happy to see Standard 7 accounts for second chair experiences. I would suggest rather than focusing on numbers, focus on skill level, training, preparedness, etc., and other experiences, such as Neglect/Abuse or Delinquency jury trials. Neglect/Abuse and Delinquency jury trials parallel criminal jury trials on so many levels. Another thought- local systems could implement a mentor program, possibly building in funds to compensate mentor attorneys. I live in a small community in Northern Michigan. There are currently seven of us on the indigent defense contract. When the more experienced attorneys start retiring (some aren't too far off), there may not be enough of us left who meet the requirements as they are currently written. Then what?

Thank you for your consideration of public comments. I hope Standard 7 can be amended to include those of us with less experience but who will provide QUALITY representation to our clients!

Sincerely,

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