

Senate Bill 189

By: Senators Tillery of the 19th, Hill of the 4th, Kennedy of the 18th, Mullis of the 53rd,  
Stone of the 23rd and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to criminal procedure,  
2 so as to change provisions relating to the legal defense of indigents; to clarify defined terms;  
3 to remove obsolete references; to change and clarify provisions relating to the authority and  
4 responsibilities of the Georgia Public Defender Council and its director; to authorize the  
5 creation of more divisions within the council; to clarify the obligation of the council and  
6 circuit public defender offices in representing individuals and providing services; to change  
7 provisions relating to the circuit public defender supervisory panel; to provide for reporting  
8 of certain information; to provide a method for an alternative delivery system to become a  
9 circuit public defender office; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and  
10 for other purposes.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

12 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

13 Title 17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to criminal procedure, is  
14 amended by revising Articles 1 and 2 of Chapter 12, relating to the Georgia Public Defender  
15 Council and public defenders, respectively, as follows:

16 style="text-align:center">"ARTICLE 1

17 17-12-1.

18 (a) This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the 'Georgia Indigent Defense Act of  
19 2003.'

20 (b) The Georgia Public Defender Council shall be an independent agency within the  
21 executive branch of state government.

22 (c) The council shall be responsible for assuring that adequate and effective legal  
23 representation is provided, independently of political considerations or private interests, to  
24 indigent persons who are entitled to representation under this chapter.

25 17-12-2.

26 As used in this chapter, the term:

27 (1) 'Assistant public defender' means an attorney who is employed by any circuit public  
28 defender.

29 (2) 'Circuit public defender' means the head of a public defender office providing  
30 indigent defense representation within any given judicial circuit of this state.

31 (3) 'Circuit public defender office' means the office of any of the several circuit public  
32 defenders.

33 (4) 'Council' means the Georgia Public Defender Council.

34 (5) 'Director' means the director of the Georgia Public Defender Council.

35 (6) 'Indigent person' or 'indigent defendant' means:

36 (A) A person charged with a misdemeanor, violation of probation, or a municipal or  
37 county offense punishable by imprisonment who earns ~~less~~ not more than 100 percent  
38 of the federal poverty guidelines unless there is evidence that the person has other  
39 resources that might reasonably be used to employ a lawyer without undue hardship on  
40 the person or his or her dependents;

41 (B) A juvenile charged with a delinquent act or a violation of probation that was  
42 imposed following an adjudication for a delinquent act punishable by detention whose  
43 parents earn ~~less~~ not more than 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines unless  
44 there is evidence that the juvenile or his or her parents have other resources that might  
45 reasonably be used to employ a lawyer without undue hardship on the juvenile, his or  
46 her parents, or the parent's dependents; and

47 (C) A person charged with a felony who earns or, in the case of a juvenile, whose  
48 parents earn, ~~less~~ not more than 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines unless  
49 there is evidence that the person has other resources that might reasonably be used to  
50 employ a lawyer without undue hardship on the person, his or her dependents, or, in the  
51 case of a juvenile, his or her parents or the parent's dependents.

52 In no case shall a person whose maximum income level exceeds 150 percent of the  
53 federal poverty level or, in the case of a juvenile, whose household income exceeds 150  
54 percent of the federal poverty level be an indigent person or indigent defendant.

55 (7) 'Legislative oversight committee' means the Legislative Oversight Committee for the  
56 Georgia Public Defender Council.

57 (8) 'Public defender' means an attorney who is employed in a circuit public defender  
58 office or who represents an indigent person pursuant to this chapter.

59 17-12-3.

60 (a) There is created the Georgia Public Defender Council to be composed of nine  
61 members. Other than county commission members, members of the council shall be  
62 individuals with significant experience working in the criminal justice system or who have  
63 demonstrated a strong commitment to the provision of adequate and effective  
64 representation of indigent defendants.

65 (b) ~~Reserved. Effective July 1, 2011, the council shall be reconstituted. The members~~  
66 ~~serving on the council immediately prior to July 1, 2011, shall cease to serve on that date,~~  
67 ~~but such prior members shall be eligible for reappointment to succeed themselves or to fill~~  
68 ~~another position on the council.~~

69 (c) The nine members of the council shall be appointed as follows:

70 (1) Five members shall be appointed by the Governor. The Governor shall appoint three  
71 county commissioners who have been elected and are serving as members of a county  
72 governing authority in this state. The county commissioner councilmembers appointed  
73 by the Governor shall be from different geographic regions of this state. The Governor  
74 may solicit recommendations for such appointees from the Association County  
75 Commissioners of Georgia. Each county commissioner councilmember shall serve a  
76 term of four years; ~~provided, however, that the initial appointments shall be for one, two,~~  
77 ~~and three years, respectively, as designated by the Governor for each appointment, and~~  
78 ~~thereafter, such members shall serve terms of four years.~~ A county commission  
79 councilmember shall be eligible to serve so long as he or she retains the office by virtue  
80 of which he or she is serving on the council. The Governor shall appoint two other  
81 members to the council, one of whom shall be a circuit public defender, who shall serve  
82 terms of four years;

83 (2) Two members shall be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and each shall serve  
84 terms of four years; provided, however, that the initial appointments shall be for one and  
85 four years, respectively, as designated by the Lieutenant Governor for each appointment,  
86 and thereafter, such members shall serve terms of four years; and

87 (3) Two members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and  
88 each shall serve terms of four years; provided, however, that the initial appointments shall  
89 be for two and three years, respectively, as designated by the Speaker of the House of  
90 Representatives for each appointment, and thereafter, such members shall serve terms of  
91 four years.

92 (d) ~~All initial terms shall begin on July 1, 2011, and their successors' terms shall begin on~~  
93 July 1 following their appointment. Any vacancy for a member shall be filled by the  
94 appointing authority, and such appointee shall serve the balance of the vacating member's  
95 unexpired term. Any member of the council may be appointed to successive terms.

96 (e) In making the appointments of members of the council who are not county  
 97 commissioners, the appointing authorities shall seek to identify and appoint persons who  
 98 represent a diversity of backgrounds and experience and may solicit suggestions from the  
 99 State Bar of Georgia, local bar associations, the Georgia Association of Criminal Defense  
 100 Lawyers, the councils representing the various categories of state court judges in Georgia,  
 101 and the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of the State of Georgia, as well as from the public  
 102 and other interested organizations and individuals within this state. The appointing  
 103 authorities may solicit recommendations for county commissioners from the Association  
 104 County Commissioners of Georgia. The appointing authorities shall not appoint a  
 105 prosecuting attorney as defined in paragraph (6) of Code Section 19-13-51, any employee  
 106 of a prosecuting attorney's office, or an employee of the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of  
 107 the State of Georgia to serve on the council.

108 17-12-4.

109 (a) The council:

110 (1) Shall be a legal entity;

111 (2) Shall have perpetual existence;

112 (3) Shall review any contract sought to be entered into by a circuit public defender office  
 113 and approve, modify, or disapprove of such contract;

114 ~~(3)~~(4) May contract;

115 ~~(4)~~(5) May own property;

116 ~~(5)~~(6) May accept funds, grants, and gifts from any public or private source, which shall  
 117 be used to defray the expenses incident to implementing its purposes;

118 ~~(6)~~(7) May adopt and use an official seal; ~~and~~

119 ~~(7)~~(8) May establish a principal office;

120 (9) May sue or be sued; and

121 (10) May seek, solicit, apply for, and utilize funds from any public or private source to  
 122 fulfill the purposes of this chapter.

123 (b) The council shall establish auditing procedures as may be required in connection with  
 124 the handling of public funds. The state auditor shall be authorized and directed to make  
 125 an annual audit of the transactions of the council and to make a complete report of the same  
 126 to the General Assembly. The annual audit shall disclose all moneys received by the  
 127 council and all expenditures made by the council by revenue source, including all programs  
 128 and special projects itemized in the General Appropriations Act. The annual audit shall  
 129 include an itemization by revenue source of encumbered and reserved money. Revenue  
 130 sources shall include each county governing authority's expenditures which are made  
 131 pursuant to Code Sections 17-12-31 and 17-12-32 and city or county expenditures which

132 are made pursuant to subsection (d) of Code Section 17-12-23. The state auditor shall also  
133 make an audit of the affairs of the council at any time when requested to do so by a  
134 majority of the council or by the Governor or General Assembly.

135 (c) The council may not provide compensation from its funds to any administrative or  
136 clerical personnel employed by the council if the personnel are then receiving retirement  
137 compensation from any retirement or pension fund created by Title 47 to provide  
138 compensation for past services as a judicial officer, prosecuting attorney, indigent defense  
139 attorney, court officer, or law enforcement officer except for county or municipal  
140 retirement funds.

141 17-12-5.

142 (a) To be eligible for appointment as the director, a candidate shall be a member in good  
143 standing of the State Bar of Georgia with at least seven years' experience in the practice of  
144 law. The director shall be appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the  
145 Governor.

146 (b)(1) The director shall work with and provide support services and programs for circuit  
147 public defender offices and other attorneys representing indigent persons in criminal or  
148 juvenile cases in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of legal representation of  
149 such persons and otherwise fulfill the purposes of this chapter. Such services and  
150 programs shall include, but shall not be limited to, technical, research, and administrative  
151 assistance; educational and training programs for attorneys, investigators, and other staff;  
152 assistance with the representation of indigent defendants with mental disabilities;  
153 assistance with the representation of juveniles; assistance with death penalty cases; and  
154 assistance with appellate advocacy.

155 (2) The director may establish divisions ~~within the office~~ to administer the services and  
156 programs as may be necessary to fulfill the purposes of this chapter. The director shall  
157 establish a mental health advocacy division and the Georgia capital defender division.

158 (3) The director may hire and supervise such staff employees and may contract with  
159 outside consultants on behalf of the ~~office~~ council as may be necessary to provide the  
160 services contemplated by this chapter.

161 (c) The director shall have and may exercise the following power and authority:

162 (1) The power and authority to take or cause to be taken any or all action necessary to  
163 perform any duties, responsibilities, or functions which the director is authorized by law  
164 to perform and to exercise any power or authority which the council is authorized under  
165 subsection (a) of Code Section 17-12-4 to exercise; and

166 (2) The power and authority to assist the council in the performance of its duties,  
167 responsibilities, and functions and the exercise of its power and authority.

168 (d) The director shall:

169 (1) Prepare and submit to the ~~council a proposed budget for the council~~ director of the  
 170 Office of Planning and Budget the council's budget estimate necessary for fulfilling the  
 171 purposes of this chapter in accordance with Code Section 45-12-78. The director ~~shall~~

172 may also prepare and submit an annual report containing pertinent data on the operations,  
 173 costs, and needs of the council and such other information as the council may require;

174 (2) Develop such procedures as the director determines may be necessary to carry out  
 175 the provisions of this chapter;

176 (3) Administer and coordinate the operations of the council;

177 (4) Maintain proper records of all financial transactions related to the operation of the  
 178 council;

179 (5) At the director's discretion, solicit and accept on behalf of the council any funds that  
 180 may become available from any source, including government, nonprofit, or private  
 181 grants, gifts, or bequests;

182 (6) Coordinate the services of the council with any federal, county, or private programs  
 183 established to provide assistance to indigent persons in cases subject to this chapter;

184 (7) Provide for the training of attorneys and other staff involved in the legal  
 185 representation of persons subject to this chapter;

186 (8) Attend all council meetings, except those meetings or portions thereof that ~~address~~  
 187 ~~the question of appointment or removal of the director;~~ involve deliberations on the:

188 (A) Removal of a circuit public defender; or

189 (B) Appeal of a list of nominees submitted by a circuit public defender supervisory  
 190 panel;

191 (9) Ensure that the expenditures of the council are not greater than the amounts budgeted  
 192 or available from other revenue sources;

193 (10) Hire or remove a mental health advocate who shall serve as director of the ~~division~~  
 194 ~~of the office of~~ mental health advocacy division;

195 (11) Hire or remove the capital defender who shall serve as the director of the ~~division~~  
 196 ~~of the office of the~~ Georgia capital defender division; ~~and~~

197 (12) Hire or remove any attorney who serves as the head of any division created by the  
 198 director; and

199 ~~(12)~~(13) Select Evaluate each circuit public ~~defender's~~ defender and evaluate his or her  
 200 job performance.

201 (e) The director shall not:

202 (1) Provide direct legal representation to any person entitled to services pursuant to this  
 203 chapter; and

204 (2) Engage in the private practice of law for profit.

205 17-12-6.

206 (a) The council may assist ~~the public defenders throughout the state in their efforts to~~  
 207 ~~provide adequate legal defense to the indigent~~ and other attorneys representing indigent  
 208 persons receiving services under this chapter. Assistance may include:

209 (1) The preparation and distribution of a basic defense manual and other educational  
 210 materials;

211 (2) The preparation and distribution of model forms and documents employed in indigent  
 212 defense;

213 (3) The promotion of and assistance in the training of indigent defense attorneys;

214 (4) The provision of legal research assistance ~~to public defenders~~; and

215 (5) The provision of such other assistance ~~to public defenders~~ as may be authorized by  
 216 law.

217 (b) The council:

218 (1) Shall be the fiscal officer for the circuit public defender offices and shall account for  
 219 all moneys received from each governing authority; and

220 (2) May collect, maintain, review, and publish in print or electronically records and  
 221 statistics for the purpose of evaluating the delivery of indigent defense representation in  
 222 Georgia.

223 17-12-7.

224 (a) All members of the council shall at all times act in the best interest of indigent  
 225 defendants who are receiving legal representation under the provisions of this chapter.

226 (b) All members of the council shall be entitled to vote on any matter coming before the  
 227 council unless otherwise provided by law or by rules adopted by the council concerning  
 228 conflicts of interest.

229 (c) Each member of the council shall serve until a successor has been appointed. Removal  
 230 of councilmembers shall be for cause and shall be in accordance with policies and  
 231 procedures adopted by the council.

232 (d) Unless otherwise provided in this article, a quorum shall be a majority of the members  
 233 of the council who are then in office, and decisions of the council shall be by majority vote  
 234 of the members present, except that a majority of the entire council shall be required to  
 235 approve the appointment of the chairperson and for annual approval of an alternative  
 236 delivery system pursuant to Code Section 17-12-36 and other matters as set forth in Code  
 237 Section 17-12-36. The vote of two-thirds of the members of the entire council shall be  
 238 required to remove the chairperson of the council or to overturn the director's decision  
 239 regarding the removal of a circuit public defender.

240 (e) The council shall meet at least semiannually and at such other times and places as it  
241 deems necessary or convenient for the performance of its duties.

242 (f) The council shall elect a chairperson and such officers from the members of the council  
243 as it deems necessary and shall adopt such rules for the transaction of its business as it  
244 desires. The chairperson and officers shall serve for a term of two years and may be  
245 removed from such positions without cause by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the  
246 entire council and for cause by a majority vote of the entire council. The chairperson shall  
247 retain a vote on all matters except those in which the chairperson has a conflict of interest  
248 or the removal of the chairperson for cause. The council shall keep and maintain minutes  
249 of all council meetings.

250 (g) The members of the council shall receive no compensation for their services but shall  
251 be reimbursed for their actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as  
252 members of the council. Any expenses incurred by the council shall be paid from the  
253 general operating budget of the council.

254 17-12-8.

255 (a) No person shall receive representation under this chapter unless he or she been  
256 appointed an attorney by the director, a circuit public defender, an individual designated  
257 by the director or a circuit public defender to make such appointments, or the director of  
258 an alternative delivery system or his or her designee.

259 (b) No person receiving representation under this chapter shall be entitled to receive other  
260 services unless the director or a circuit public defender approves of such services.

261 (c) When a person waives his or her right to counsel in any court of this state, he or she  
262 shall not be entitled to counsel or other services under this chapter until a court has  
263 reinstated the right to counsel and he or she applies for the appointment of an attorney from  
264 a circuit public defender or his or her designee and is determined to be an indigent person.

265 (d) No court shall on its own authority obligate the council or a circuit public defender  
266 office to provide representation or other services to any person or appoint an attorney who  
267 is employed by the council or a circuit public defender office to represent a person.

268 ~~Reserved.~~

269 17-12-9.

270 The council shall be authorized to conduct or approve for credit or reimbursement, or both,  
271 basic and continuing legal education courses or other appropriate training programs for ~~the~~  
272 circuit public defenders or their, circuit public defenders' staff members, employees of the  
273 council, and attorneys with whom the council has a contractual relationship. The council,  
274 ~~in accordance with such policies as it shall adopt,~~ shall be authorized to provide



275 reimbursement, in whole or in part, for the actual expenses incurred by ~~any circuit public~~  
 276 ~~defender or their staff members~~ individuals employed by the council or a circuit public  
 277 defender office in attending any approved course or training program from funds as may  
 278 be appropriated or otherwise made available to the council. The ~~circuit public defenders~~  
 279 ~~or their staff members~~ individuals employed by the council or a circuit public defender  
 280 office shall be authorized to receive reimbursement for actual expenses incurred in  
 281 attending approved courses or training programs. ~~The council shall adopt policies~~  
 282 ~~governing the approval of courses and training programs for credit or reimbursement as~~  
 283 ~~may be necessary to administer this Code section properly.~~

284 17-12-10.

285 (a) Upon request, the ~~council~~ director shall prepare annually a report of ~~its~~ the council's  
 286 activities in order to provide the General Assembly, the Governor, and the Supreme Court  
 287 of Georgia with an accurate description and accounting of the preceding year's  
 288 expenditures and revenue, including moneys received from cities and county governing  
 289 authorities.

290 (b) Upon request, the ~~council~~ director shall provide to the General Assembly, the  
 291 Governor, and the Supreme Court of Georgia a detailed analysis of all grants and funds,  
 292 whether public or private, applied for or granted, together with how and in what manner  
 293 the same are to be utilized and expended.

294 (c) Upon request, the director shall prepare annually a report in order to provide the  
 295 General Assembly, the Supreme Court, and the Governor with information on the council's  
 296 assessment of the delivery of indigent defense services, including, but not limited to, the  
 297 costs involved in operating each program and each governing authority's indigent person  
 298 verification system, methodology used, costs expended, and savings realized.

299 17-12-10.1.

300 (a) There is created the Legislative Oversight Committee for the Georgia Public Defender  
 301 Council which shall be composed of eight persons: three members of the House of  
 302 Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, three members  
 303 of the Senate appointed by the ~~Senate Committee on Assignments or such person or entity~~  
 304 ~~as established by Senate rule~~ President of the Senate, and one member of the House of  
 305 Representatives and one member of the Senate appointed by the Governor. The members  
 306 of such committee shall be selected within ten days after the convening of the General  
 307 Assembly in each odd-numbered year and shall serve until their successors are appointed.

308 (b) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint a member of such  
 309 committee to serve as chairperson, and the ~~Senate Committee on Assignments or such~~

310 ~~person or entity as established by Senate rule~~ President of the Senate shall appoint one  
 311 member of the committee to serve as vice chairperson during each even-numbered year.  
 312 ~~The Senate Committee on Assignments or such person or entity as established by Senate~~  
 313 ~~rule~~ President of the Senate shall appoint a member of such committee to serve as  
 314 chairperson, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint one member  
 315 to serve as vice chairperson during each odd-numbered year. Such committee shall meet  
 316 at least once each year and, upon the call of the chairperson, at such additional times as  
 317 deemed necessary by the chairperson.

318 (c) It shall be the duty of such committee to review and evaluate:

- 319 (1) Information on new programs submitted by the council;
- 320 (2) Information on policies proposed by the council;
- 321 (3) The strategic plans for the council;
- 322 (4) Program evaluation reports and budget recommendations of the council;
- 323 (5) The fiscal impact of fees and fines on counties;
- 324 (6) The reports submitted pursuant to Code Section 15-21A-7 in order to identify, among  
 325 other things, opportunities to reduce or consolidate fees, fines, and surcharges; and
- 326 (7) Such other information or reports as deemed necessary by such committee.

327 (d) The council and director shall cooperate with such committee and provide such  
 328 information or reports as requested by the committee for the performance of its functions.

329 (e) Reserved. ~~The council shall submit its budget estimate to the director of the Office  
 330 of Planning and Budget in accordance with subsection (a) of Code Section 45-12-78.~~

331 (f) The members of such committee shall receive the allowances authorized for legislative  
 332 members of legislative committees. The funds necessary to pay such allowances shall  
 333 come from funds appropriated to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

334 (g) The legislative oversight committee shall be authorized to request that a performance  
 335 audit of the council be conducted.

336 17-12-10.2.

337 The members of the council as created by this article, the members of ~~the~~ each circuit  
 338 public defender supervisory panel created by Article 2 of this chapter, and other  
 339 policy-making or administrative personnel acting in a policy-making or administrative  
 340 capacity shall not be subject to civil liability resulting from any act or failure to act in the  
 341 implementation and carrying out of the purposes of this chapter.

342 17-12-11.

343 (a) The mental health advocacy division shall represent in any court in this state indigent  
 344 persons found not guilty by reason of insanity at the time of the crime or found mentally

345 incompetent to stand trial ~~and shall be the successor to the office of mental health advocacy~~  
 346 ~~created by Article 4 of this chapter as it existed on June 30, 2008. Any assets or resources~~  
 347 ~~of the office of mental health advocacy shall be transferred to the council.~~ The mental  
 348 health advocacy division ~~office~~ shall serve all counties of this state.

349 (b) Whenever any person has been found not guilty by reason of insanity at the time of the  
 350 crime pursuant to Code Section 17-7-131 or found mentally incompetent to stand trial  
 351 pursuant to Code Section 17-7-130 and has been determined to be an indigent person, the  
 352 ~~court in which~~ circuit public defender or the director of an alternative delivery system  
 353 authorized under Code Section 17-12-36, as applicable, for the judicial circuit where such  
 354 case is pending shall notify the mental health advocacy division, and the division may  
 355 assume the defense and representation of such person in all matters pursuant to Code  
 356 Sections 17-7-130 and 17-7-131, as applicable, if the resources, funding, and staffing of  
 357 the division allow; provided, however, that the circuit public defender or other attorney  
 358 who represented the indigent person at the time of the finding of not guilty by reason of  
 359 insanity at the time of the crime or the finding of mentally incompetent to stand trial shall  
 360 have the option to retain responsibility for the representation of any such person.

361 (c) Nothing in this Code section shall prevent the circuit public defender, the court, or the  
 362 court appointed attorney from requesting the participation of the mental health advocacy  
 363 division prior to a finding of not guilty by reason of insanity at the time of the crime or a  
 364 finding of mentally incompetent to stand trial. The circuit public defender, the court, or the  
 365 ~~court appointed~~ attorney appointed under this chapter may request that the mental health  
 366 advocacy division assist in the case prior to a plea being entered and accepted by the court.

367 (d) If for any reason the mental health advocacy division is unable to represent any  
 368 indigent person found not guilty by reason of insanity at the time of the crime or found  
 369 mentally incompetent to stand trial, such representation shall be provided as otherwise  
 370 provided by law.

371 (e) The director shall be responsible for management of the mental health advocacy  
 372 division; provided, however, that the director may delegate day-to-day operations of the  
 373 division to the mental health advocate.

374 17-12-12.

375 (a) The Georgia capital defender division shall represent all indigent persons charged with  
 376 a capital felony for which the death penalty is being sought in any court in this state ~~and~~  
 377 ~~shall be the successor to the Office of the Georgia Capital Defender created by Article 6~~  
 378 ~~of this chapter as it existed on June 30, 2008. Any assets or resources of the Office of the~~  
 379 ~~Georgia Capital Defender shall be transferred to the council.~~ The Georgia capital defender  
 380 division shall serve all counties of this state.

381 (b) Whenever any person accused of a capital felony for which the death penalty is being  
 382 sought has been determined to be an indigent person who has requested the assistance of  
 383 counsel, the ~~court in which the~~ circuit public defender or the director of an alternative  
 384 delivery system authorized under Code Section 17-12-36, as applicable, for the judicial  
 385 circuit where such charges are pending shall notify the Georgia capital defender division,  
 386 and the division shall assume the defense of such person except as provided in Code  
 387 Section 17-12-12.1.

388 (c) No person shall be assigned the primary responsibility of representing an indigent  
 389 person accused of a capital offense for which the death penalty is sought unless such person  
 390 is authorized to practice law in this state and is otherwise competent to counsel and defend  
 391 a person charged with a capital felony.

392 (d) ~~For The Georgia capital defender division or appointed counsel's defense of a~~  
 393 ~~defendant in a case in which the death penalty is sought, any attorney employed by the~~  
 394 council or appointed counsel shall include represent the defendant in all proceedings in the  
 395 trial court and any appeals to the Supreme Court of Georgia. Neither the Georgia capital  
 396 defender division nor appointed counsel shall; provided, however, that he or she shall not  
 397 assist with any petition for a writ of habeas corpus in federal court.

398 (e) The director shall be responsible for management of the Georgia capital defender  
 399 division; provided, however, that the director may delegate day-to-day operations of the  
 400 division to the capital defender.

401 17-12-12.1.

402 (a) If there is a conflict of interest such that the Georgia capital defender division is unable  
 403 to defend any indigent person accused of a capital felony for which the death penalty is  
 404 being sought, except as provided in subsection (e) of this Code section, the director shall  
 405 determine and appoint counsel to represent the defendant. The director shall establish the  
 406 contractual agreement with the defendant's counsel for payment of representing the  
 407 defendant, and, when feasible and prudent, a flat fee structure shall be utilized.

408 (b) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this Code section, a ~~A~~ maximum of two  
 409 attorneys shall be paid by the council pursuant to a contractual agreement or at an hourly  
 410 rate established by the council with state funds appropriated to the council. State funds  
 411 shall be appropriated to the council for use by the Georgia capital defender division for the  
 412 first \$150,000.00 paid for each death penalty case. Funding for attorney's fees and  
 413 expenses between \$150,000.01 and \$250,000.00 for each death penalty case shall be paid  
 414 through state appropriations for 75 percent of such attorney's fees and expenses, and the  
 415 county governing authority where the indictment was returned shall pay 25 percent of such  
 416 attorney's fees and expenses. Funding for all attorney's fees and expenses in excess of

417 \$250,000.00 for each death penalty case shall be paid through state appropriations for 50  
 418 percent of such attorney's fees and expenses, and the county governing authority where the  
 419 indictment was returned shall pay 50 percent of such attorney's fees and expenses.

420 (c) The council, with the assistance of the Georgia capital defender division, shall establish  
 421 guidelines for all expense requests for cases in which the death penalty is sought, including,  
 422 but not limited to, attorney's fees, expert witness fees, investigative fees, travel and  
 423 accommodation expenses, and copy and transcription costs.

424 (d) A county governing authority may provide supplemental compensation to counsel  
 425 appointed pursuant to this Code section.

426 (e) The director may establish conflict case divisions for the circumstances when the  
 427 Georgia capital defender division is unable to represent an indigent person accused with  
 428 a capital felony for which the death penalty is being sought due to a conflict of interest.  
 429 The qualifications set forth in subsection (c) of Code Section 17-12-12 shall equally apply  
 430 to attorneys in a conflict division.

431 ARTICLE 2

432 17-12-20.

433 (a) ~~There~~ ~~On and after July 1, 2011,~~ ~~there~~ is created in each judicial circuit in this state a  
 434 circuit public defender supervisory panel to be composed of three members, all of whom  
 435 shall be attorneys who regularly practice in that particular judicial circuit. The chief judge  
 436 of the superior court of the circuit shall appoint one member. The Governor shall appoint  
 437 one member. In a single county judicial circuit, the chairperson of the governing authority  
 438 or sole commissioner shall appoint one member; in multicounty judicial circuits, the  
 439 chairpersons of the governing authorities or sole commissioners shall caucus and appoint  
 440 one member. When a caucus is needed to appoint a member of the supervisory panel, the  
 441 chairperson or sole commissioner of the largest county by population in the judicial circuit  
 442 shall convene the caucus. Members of the circuit public defender supervisory panel shall  
 443 be individuals with significant experience working in the criminal justice system or who  
 444 have demonstrated a strong commitment to the provision of adequate and effective  
 445 representation of indigent defendants. A prosecuting attorney as defined in paragraph (6)  
 446 of Code Section 19-13-51, any employee of a prosecuting attorney's office, or an employee  
 447 of the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of the State of Georgia shall not serve as a member  
 448 of the circuit public defender supervisory panel after July 1, 2005. ~~No~~ ~~On and after July~~  
 449 ~~1, 2008,~~ ~~no~~ employees of the council shall serve as a member of the circuit public defender  
 450 supervisory panel. Members of the circuit public defender supervisory panel shall reside  
 451 in the judicial circuit in which they serve. The circuit public defender supervisory panel

452 members shall serve for a term of five years. Any vacancy for an appointed member shall  
 453 be filled by the appointing authority within 60 days of the vacancy occurring.

454 (b)(1) By majority vote of its membership, the circuit public defender supervisory panel  
 455 shall annually elect a chairperson and secretary. The chairperson shall conduct the  
 456 meetings and deliberations of the panel and direct all activities. The secretary shall keep  
 457 accurate records of all the meetings and deliberations and perform such other duties as  
 458 the chairperson may direct. The panel may be called into session upon the direction of  
 459 the chairperson, ~~or by the council, or the director.~~

460 (2) By majority vote of its membership, the circuit public defender supervisory panel  
 461 shall nominate not more than five people to serve as the circuit public defender in the  
 462 circuit. When such panel is determining its list of nominees, it shall consider including  
 463 the individual serving as the circuit public defender for inclusion on its list of nominees.

464 (3) The director shall select the circuit public defender from the panel's list of nominees;  
 465 provided, however, that, if the director determines that no nominee is acceptable, the  
 466 director shall return the list to such panel along with the reasons for his or her findings  
 467 and require the panel to reconsider its nominees and submit a new list of nominees. If the  
 468 director returns a supervisory panel's list of nominees without selecting a circuit public  
 469 defender, by majority vote of such panel, it may appeal the director's decision to the  
 470 council so long as its appeal is submitted to the council within 15 days of the director's  
 471 notice to such panel of the director's request for another list of nominees. By a vote of  
 472 two-thirds of the members of the entire council, the council may overturn the director's  
 473 decision and require the director to select the circuit public defender from the panel's  
 474 original list of nominees. When an appeal is made to the council, the council shall take  
 475 action in hearing the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting and take final action  
 476 within 30 days thereafter.

477 (4) A circuit public defender shall serve a term ~~for up to~~ of four years and may be  
 478 appointed for successive terms but shall not be reappointed if he or she was removed  
 479 pursuant to subsection (c) of this Code section.

480 (c) A circuit public defender may be removed for cause by the director. ~~A~~ If a circuit  
 481 public defender ~~wants to appeal such removal, he or she~~ may appeal the director's decision  
 482 to the council. By a vote of two-thirds of the members of the entire council, the council  
 483 may overturn the director's decision. Any appeal ~~regarding a removal request~~ under this  
 484 subsection shall be submitted to the chairperson of the council within 15 days of the  
 485 effective date of the removal, ~~and the.~~ The council shall take action in hearing hear the  
 486 appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting ~~and~~ after the appeal was submitted. The  
 487 council shall take final action on any appeal within 30 days ~~thereafter~~ of hearing the appeal.  
 488 A circuit public defender who has been removed by the director and who has filed an

489 appeal with the council shall ~~continue to serve as the circuit public defender until the~~  
 490 ~~council reaches a decision on the appeal~~ be replaced by an interim circuit public defender  
 491 as if there were a vacancy for the position.

492 (d) A circuit public defender supervisory panel may convene at any time during its circuit  
 493 public defender's term of office and shall convene at least annually for purposes of  
 494 reviewing the circuit public defender's job performance and the performance of the circuit  
 495 public defender office. The director and circuit public defender shall be notified at least  
 496 two weeks in advance of the convening of the circuit public defender supervisory panel.  
 497 The circuit public defender shall be given the opportunity to appear before the circuit  
 498 public defender supervisory panel and present evidence and testimony. The chairperson  
 499 shall determine the agenda for the annual review process, but, at a minimum, such review  
 500 shall include usage of state and local funding, expenditures, and budgeting matters. The  
 501 chairperson shall make an annual report on or before the thirtieth day of September of each  
 502 year concerning the circuit public defender supervisory panel's findings regarding the job  
 503 performance of the circuit public defender and his or her office to the director on a form  
 504 provided to the panel by the director. If at any time the circuit public defender supervisory  
 505 panel finds that the circuit public defender is performing in a less than satisfactory manner  
 506 or finds information of specific misconduct, the circuit public defender supervisory panel  
 507 may by majority vote of its members adopt a resolution seeking review of its findings and  
 508 remonstrative action, including the removal of the circuit public defender, by the director.  
 509 Such resolution shall specify the reason for such request. All evidence presented and the  
 510 findings of the circuit public defender supervisory panel shall be forwarded to the director  
 511 within 15 days of the adoption of the resolution. The director shall initiate action on the  
 512 circuit public defender supervisory panel's resolution within 30 days of receiving the  
 513 resolution. The director shall notify the circuit public defender supervisory panel, in  
 514 writing, of any actions taken pursuant to submission of a resolution under this subsection.  
 515 (e) If a vacancy occurs for the position of circuit public defender, the director shall appoint  
 516 an interim circuit public defender to serve until the director has appointed a replacement.  
 517 Within ~~30~~ 60 days of the vacancy occurring, the circuit public defender supervisory panel  
 518 shall meet and nominate not more than five people to serve as a replacement circuit public  
 519 defender. The director may extend such panel's deadline to submit nominees to replace the  
 520 circuit public defender. The director shall select the replacement circuit public defender  
 521 from the panel's list of nominees in the same manner as set forth in subsection (b) of this  
 522 Code section.

523 17-12-21.

524 To be eligible to fill the position of circuit public defender, a person must:

- 525 (1) Have attained the age of 25 years;  
 526 (2) Have been duly admitted and licensed to practice law in the superior courts for at  
 527 least three years;  
 528 (3) Be a member in good standing of the State Bar of Georgia; and  
 529 (4) If previously disbarred from the practice of law, have been reinstated as provided by  
 530 law.

531 17-12-22.

532 (a) The director, with input from the council, shall establish a procedure for providing  
 533 legal representation in cases where the circuit public defender office has a conflict of  
 534 interest. Such procedure may include, but shall not be limited to, the appointment of  
 535 individual counsel on a case-by-case basis, ~~or the utilization of another circuit public~~  
 536 ~~defender office, or the creation of conflict divisions.~~ Whatever procedure the director  
 537 establishes for each circuit's conflict of interest cases shall be adhered to by the circuit  
 538 public defender office. It is the intent of the General Assembly that the director consider  
 539 the most efficient and effective system to provide legal representation where the circuit  
 540 public defender office has a conflict of interest.

541 (b) The circuit public defender shall ~~establish a method for identifying~~ identify conflicts  
 542 of interest at the earliest ~~possible~~ practical opportunity. If there is a conflict of interest such  
 543 that the circuit public defender office cannot represent a defendant and an attorney who is  
 544 not employed by the circuit public defender office or council is appointed, such attorney  
 545 shall have a contractual relationship with the council to represent indigent persons in  
 546 conflict of interest cases, and such relationship may include, but shall not be limited to, a  
 547 flat fee structure.

548 (c) Attorneys who seek appointment in conflict cases shall have such experience or  
 549 training in the defense of criminal cases as is necessary in light of the complexity of the  
 550 case to which he or she is appointed and shall ~~meet~~ have such qualifications ~~and standards~~  
 551 ~~for the representation of indigent defendants as are established~~ as are required by the  
 552 council.

553 17-12-23.

554 (a) The circuit public defender shall provide representation in the following actions and  
 555 proceedings:

- 556 (1) Any case prosecuted in a superior court under the laws of the State of Georgia in  
 557 which there is a possibility that a sentence of imprisonment or probation or a suspended  
 558 sentence of imprisonment may be adjudged;  
 559 (2) A hearing on a revocation of probation in a superior court;



560 (3) Any juvenile court case where the juvenile is charged with a delinquent act or a  
 561 violation of probation when such probation was based on an adjudication for a delinquent  
 562 act and the juvenile may face a disposition of confinement, commitment, or probation;  
 563 and

564 (4) Any direct appeal of any of the proceedings enumerated in paragraphs (1) through  
 565 (3) of this subsection.

566 (b) In each of the actions and proceedings enumerated in subsection (a) of this Code  
 567 section, entitlement to the services of ~~counsel~~ an attorney begins not more than three  
 568 ~~business~~ days after the indigent person is taken into custody or service is made upon him  
 569 or her of the charge, petition, notice, or other initiating process and such person makes an  
 570 application for ~~counsel~~ an attorney to be appointed.

571 (c) Each circuit public defender shall establish a juvenile division within the circuit public  
 572 defender office to specialize in the defense of juveniles.

573 (d) A city or county may contract with the circuit public defender office for the provision  
 574 of criminal defense for indigent persons and other indigent individuals accused of violating  
 575 city or county ordinances or state laws so long as the council approves of such contract.  
 576 If a city or county does not contract with the circuit public defender office, the city or  
 577 county shall be subject to all applicable policies ~~and standards~~ adopted by the council for  
 578 representation of indigent persons in this state.

579 (e) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this Code section, the director may allow a public  
 580 defender or attorney providing services under this chapter to an indigent defendant or other  
 581 indigent individual to represent such person in an ancillary motion or action pertinent to  
 582 such person's criminal or juvenile case or the consequences therefrom, on a case-by-case  
 583 basis.

584 (f) As used in this Code section, the term 'indigent individual' means a person or juvenile  
 585 who is a party to a legal proceeding not described in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of  
 586 paragraph (6) of Code Section 17-12-2 who earns or, in the case of a juvenile, whose  
 587 parents earn, not more than 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines unless there is  
 588 evidence that the person has other resources that might reasonably be used to employ a  
 589 lawyer without undue hardship on the person, his or her dependents, or, in the case of a  
 590 juvenile, his or her parents or the parent's dependents.

591 17-12-24.

592 (a) The director, the circuit public defender, their designees, any other person or entity  
 593 providing indigent defense services, or the system established pursuant to Code Section  
 594 17-12-80 shall determine if a person or juvenile arrested, detained, or charged in any  
 595 manner who makes an application for an attorney to be appointed is an indigent person

596 entitled to representation under this chapter; provided, however, that it shall utilize the  
597 criteria and procedure developed and approved by the council in making such  
598 determination.

599 (b) The circuit public defenders shall administer and coordinate the day-to-day operations  
600 of their respective offices and shall supervise the assistant public defenders and other staff  
601 serving in the office.

602 (c) The circuit public defender shall keep and maintain appropriate records, which shall  
603 include the number of persons represented, including cases assigned to other counsel based  
604 on conflict of interest; the offenses charged; the outcome of each case; the expenditures  
605 made in carrying out the duties imposed by this chapter; and any other information  
606 requested by the council.

607 17-12-25.

608 (a) Each circuit public defender shall receive an annual salary of \$99,526.00, and  
609 cost-of-living adjustments may be given by the General Assembly in the General  
610 Appropriations Act by a percentage not to exceed the average percentage of the general  
611 increase in salary as may from time to time be granted to employees of the executive,  
612 judicial, and legislative branches of government; provided, however, that any increase for  
613 such circuit public defender shall not include within-grade step increases for which  
614 classified employees as defined by Code Section 45-20-2 are eligible. Any increase  
615 granted pursuant to this subsection shall become effective at the same time that funds are  
616 made available for the increase for such employees. The Office of Planning and Budget  
617 shall calculate the average percentage increase. Each circuit public defender may also be  
618 entitled to an accountability court salary supplement as set forth in Code Section  
619 17-12-25.1.

620 (b) The county or counties ~~comprising~~ composing the judicial circuit may supplement the  
621 salary of the circuit public defender in an amount as is or may be authorized by local Act  
622 or in an amount as may be determined by the governing authority of the county or counties,  
623 whichever is greater. The circuit public defender shall report to the council any such  
624 supplement received.

625 (c) No circuit public defender shall engage in the private practice of law for profit or serve  
626 concurrently in any judicial office.

627 17-12-25.1.

628 (a) Whenever a circuit has implemented a drug court division, mental health court  
629 division, or veterans court division, then on and after January 1, 2016, the state shall pay  
630 the circuit public defender in such circuit an annual accountability court supplement of

631 \$6,000.00. Such supplement shall be paid from state funds by the Georgia Public Defender  
632 Council in equal monthly installments as regular compensation.

633 (b) Notwithstanding Code Sections 17-12-27 and 17-12-28, the accountability court salary  
634 supplement paid pursuant to this Code section shall not be included in any calculation of  
635 compensation paid to assistant circuit public defenders or investigators that is measured as  
636 a percentage of a circuit public defender's salary.

637 (c) When a local law provides for a salary to be paid based on a percentage of, total  
638 compensation for, or similar mathematical relationship to a circuit public defender's salary,  
639 the accountability court salary supplement paid pursuant to this Code section shall not be  
640 included in the calculation of compensation to be paid by a county, municipality, or  
641 consolidated government.

642 (d) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of Code Section 17-12-25 and Code Section 17-12-30,  
643 on and after January 1, 2016, no county or counties ~~comprising~~ composing the circuit shall  
644 increase an aggregate county salary supplement paid to the circuit public defender or a  
645 state-paid position appointed pursuant to this article, if such supplement is \$50,000.00 or  
646 more.

647 17-12-26.

648 Reserved. ~~The council shall prepare and submit to the director of the Office of Planning~~  
649 ~~and Budget its budget estimate necessary for fulfilling the purposes of this chapter in~~  
650 ~~accordance with Code Section 45-12-78. The council shall be authorized to seek, solicit,~~  
651 ~~apply for, and utilize funds from any public or private source to use in fulfilling the~~  
652 ~~purposes of this chapter.~~

653 17-12-27.

654 (a) Subject to the provisions of this Code section, the circuit public defender in each  
655 judicial circuit is authorized to appoint:

656 (1) One assistant public defender for each superior court judge authorized for the circuit,  
657 excluding the chief judge and senior judges; and

658 (2) Subject to funds being appropriated by the General Assembly or otherwise available,  
659 additional assistant public defenders as may be authorized by the ~~council~~ director. In  
660 authorizing additional assistant public defenders, the ~~council~~ director shall consider the  
661 caseload, present staff, and resources available to each circuit public defender and shall  
662 make ~~authorizations~~ such allocations as will contribute to the ~~efficiency of individual~~  
663 ~~circuit public defenders and the effectiveness of providing~~ provision of adequate legal  
664 defense for indigent defendants entitled to services under this chapter.

665 (b) Each assistant public defender appointed pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code  
666 section shall be classified based on education, training, and experience. The jobs of  
667 assistant public defenders and the minimum qualifications required for appointment or  
668 promotion to each job shall be established by the council based on education, training, and  
669 experience and in accordance with the provisions of Code Sections 17-12-30 and 17-12-34.

670 (c) Each assistant public defender appointed pursuant to this Code section shall be  
671 compensated based on a salary ~~range~~ established in accordance with subsection (c) of Code  
672 Section 17-12-30. The salary ~~range~~ for each job established in accordance with subsection  
673 (b) of this Code section shall be as follows:

674 (1) Assistant public defender I. Not less than \$38,124.00 nor more than 65 percent of  
675 the compensation of the circuit public defender;

676 (2) Assistant public defender II. Not less than \$40,884.00 nor more than 70 percent of  
677 the compensation of the circuit public defender;

678 (3) Assistant public defender III. Not less than \$45,108.00 nor more than 80 percent of  
679 the compensation of the circuit public defender; and

680 (4) Assistant public defender IV. Not less than \$52,176.00 ~~nor more than 90 percent of~~  
681 ~~the compensation of the circuit public defender.~~

682 (d) All personnel actions involving attorneys appointed pursuant to this Code section shall  
683 be made by the circuit public defender in writing in accordance with the provisions of Code  
684 Section 17-12-30.

685 (e)(1) All salary advancements shall be based on quality of work, education, and  
686 performance.

687 (2) The salary of an assistant public defender appointed pursuant to this Code section  
688 may be increased at the first of the calendar month following the anniversary of his or her  
689 appointment.

690 (3) The salary of any assistant public defender who, subsequent to his or her appointment  
691 pursuant to this Code section, is awarded an LL.M. or S.J.D. degree by a law school  
692 recognized by the State Bar of Georgia from which a graduate of or student enrolled  
693 therein is permitted to take the bar examination or by a law school accredited by the  
694 American Bar Association or the Association of American Law Schools may be increased  
695 effective on the first day of the calendar month following the award of the degree,  
696 provided that such advancement does not exceed the maximum of the salary ~~range~~  
697 applicable to the attorney's job classification.

698 (f) Any assistant public defender appointed pursuant to this Code section may be promoted  
699 to the next highest job at any time the attorney meets the minimum qualifications for such  
700 job, but in order to be eligible for promotion, the attorney shall have served not less than  
701 12 months in the job from which the attorney is to be promoted. When an assistant public

702 defender is promoted to the next highest job, the assistant public defender shall enter the  
703 higher job at an annual salary greater than the annual salary the assistant public defender  
704 was receiving immediately prior to the promotion.

705 (g) All full-time state paid employees of the ~~office of the~~ circuit public defender office  
706 shall be state employees in the unclassified service as defined by Chapter 20 of Title 45  
707 with all benefits of such appointed state employees as provided by law. A circuit public  
708 defender, assistant public defender, or local public defender may be issued an employee  
709 identification card by his or her employing agency; provided, however, that no employer  
710 of any such public defender shall issue nor shall any public defender display, wear, or carry  
711 any badge, shield, card, or other item that is similar to a law enforcement officer's badge  
712 or that could be reasonably construed to indicate that the public defender is a peace officer  
713 or law enforcement official.

714 (h) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (g) of this Code section, an employee of  
715 a local public defender office who was an employee of the office on June 30, 2004, and  
716 who becomes a circuit public defender or an employee of a circuit public defender office  
717 before July 1, 2005, may elect, with the consent of the former employer and the consent  
718 of the council, to remain an employee of the entity for which the employee worked as a  
719 local public defender; and such entity shall be his or her employer for all purposes,  
720 including, without limitation, compensation and employee benefits. The right to make an  
721 election pursuant to this subsection shall expire on July 1, 2005. The council shall  
722 reimburse the appropriate entity for compensation, benefits, and employer contributions  
723 under the federal Social Security Act, but the total payment from the council to the entity  
724 on behalf of the employee shall not exceed the amount otherwise payable to or for the  
725 employee under the circumstance where the employee had become a state employee.

726 17-12-28.

727 (a) Subject to the provisions of this Code section, the circuit public defender in each  
728 judicial circuit is authorized to appoint one investigator to assist the circuit public defender  
729 in the performance of his or her official duties in the preparation of cases for trial. Subject  
730 to funds being appropriated by the General Assembly or otherwise available, the circuit  
731 public defender in each judicial circuit may appoint additional investigators as may be  
732 authorized by the council. In authorizing additional investigators, the council shall  
733 consider the caseload, present staff, and resources available to each circuit public defender  
734 and shall make authorizations as will contribute to the efficiency of individual circuit  
735 public defenders and the effectiveness of circuit public defenders throughout the state in  
736 providing adequate legal defense for indigent defendants.

737 (b) An investigator appointed pursuant to this Code section shall be not less than 21 years  
738 of age and shall serve at the pleasure of the circuit public defender.

739 (c) An investigator appointed pursuant to this Code section shall:

740 (1) Assist the attorneys within the ~~office of the~~ circuit public defender office in the  
741 preparation of cases for preliminary hearings, pretrial hearings, and trial; and

742 (2) Perform other duties as are required by the circuit public defender.

743 (d) Each investigator appointed pursuant to this Code section shall be compensated based  
744 on a salary range established pursuant to Code Section 17-12-30. The salary range for the  
745 investigator appointed pursuant to this Code section shall be not less than \$30,828.00 nor  
746 more than 70 percent of the compensation of the circuit public defender from state funds.

747 (e)(1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, an investigator appointed  
748 pursuant to this Code section shall be appointed initially to the entry grade and salary of  
749 the job ~~on the state-wide pay ranges~~.

750 (2) Any person who is employed in a nonstate paid investigator's position within the  
751 ~~office of the~~ circuit public defender office may be transferred to a state paid position.  
752 Such transfer shall be to the job and salary range commensurate with the education and  
753 experience of the employee.

754 (3) Any person who is employed as a peace officer by an agency of the executive branch  
755 of state government who is appointed as an investigator pursuant to this Code section  
756 without a break in service may be appointed to an annual salary at least equal to the  
757 annual salary the person received on the last day of employment immediately preceding  
758 said appointment.

759 (4) Any person who was a certified peace officer employed on a full-time basis by this  
760 state, the United States or any of the several states, or a political subdivision or authority  
761 thereof may be appointed to the salary that gives the officer credit for experience as a  
762 full-time certified peace officer.

763 (f) Personnel appointed pursuant to this Code section shall be reimbursed for actual  
764 expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

765 17-12-29.

766 (a) Each circuit public defender is authorized to employ administrative, clerical, and  
767 paraprofessional personnel as may be authorized by the council based on funds  
768 appropriated by the General Assembly or otherwise available; provided, however, that each  
769 circuit public defender shall be authorized not less than two such personnel. In authorizing  
770 administrative, clerical, and paraprofessional personnel, the council shall consider the  
771 caseload, present staff, and resources available to each circuit public defender and shall

772 make authorizations as will contribute to the efficiency of individual circuit public  
773 defenders in providing effective criminal defense for indigent defendants.

774 (b) Personnel appointed pursuant to this Code section shall be compensated based on a  
775 salary ~~range~~ developed in accordance with Code Section 17-12-30.

776 (c) All personnel actions involving personnel appointed pursuant to this Code section shall  
777 be in accordance with the provisions of Code Section 17-12-30.

778 17-12-30.

779 (a) All state paid personnel employed by the circuit public defenders pursuant to this  
780 article shall be employees of the executive branch of state government and shall be in the  
781 unclassified service as defined by Code Section 45-20-2.

782 (b) Personnel employed by the circuit public defenders pursuant to this article shall have  
783 the authority, duties, powers, and responsibilities as are authorized by law or as assigned  
784 by the circuit public defender and shall serve at the pleasure of the circuit public defender.

785 (c)(1) The council shall establish ~~salary ranges~~ salaries for each state paid position  
786 authorized by this article or any other provision of law. ~~Salary ranges shall be similar to~~  
787 ~~the state-wide and senior executive ranges adopted pursuant to the rules of the State~~  
788 ~~Personnel Board and shall provide for minimum, midpoint, and maximum salaries not to~~  
789 ~~exceed the maximum allowable salary. In establishing the salary ranges, all amounts will~~  
790 ~~be rounded off to the nearest whole dollar.~~ The council may, from time to time, revise  
791 ~~the salary ranges~~ salaries to include across-the-board increases which the General  
792 Assembly may from time to time authorize in the General Appropriations Act.

793 (2) The circuit public defender shall fix the compensation of each state paid employee  
794 appointed pursuant to this article in accordance with the job to which the person is  
795 appointed and the appropriate salary ~~range~~.

796 (3) All salary advancements shall be based on quality of work, training, and  
797 performance. The salary of state paid personnel appointed pursuant to this article may  
798 be increased at the first of the calendar month following the annual anniversary of the  
799 person's appointment. No employee's salary shall be advanced beyond the maximum  
800 established in the applicable ~~pay range~~ position.

801 (4) Any reduction in salary shall be made in accordance with the salary ~~range~~ for the  
802 position and the policies adopted by the council.

803 (5) The compensation of state paid personnel appointed pursuant to this article shall be  
804 paid in equal installments by the council as provided by this subsection from funds  
805 appropriated for such purpose. The council may authorize employees compensated  
806 pursuant to this Code section to participate in voluntary salary deductions as provided by  
807 Article 3 of Chapter 7 of Title 45.

808 (6) The governing authority of the county or counties comprising a judicial circuit may  
 809 supplement the salary or fringe benefits of any state paid position appointed pursuant to  
 810 this article.

811 (7) The governing authority of any municipality within the judicial circuit may, with the  
 812 approval of the circuit public defender, supplement the salary or fringe benefits of any  
 813 state paid position appointed pursuant to this article.

814 (8) The circuit public defender shall report to the council the amount and nature of any  
 815 supplement being paid to an individual in a state-paid position.

816 17-12-31.

817 (a) The circuit public defender in each judicial circuit may employ additional assistant  
 818 circuit public defenders, deputy circuit public defenders, or other attorneys, investigators,  
 819 paraprofessionals, clerical assistants, and other employees or independent contractors if the  
 820 employment of such additional personnel is provided for by local law or if the employment  
 821 of such additional personnel is specifically authorized and funded by the governing  
 822 authority of the county or counties ~~comprising~~ composing the judicial circuit. The circuit  
 823 public defender shall define the duties and fix the title of any attorney or other employee  
 824 of the ~~office of the~~ circuit public defender office.

825 (b) Personnel employed by the circuit public defender pursuant to this Code section shall  
 826 serve at the pleasure of the circuit public defender and shall be compensated by the county  
 827 or counties ~~comprising~~ composing the judicial circuit in the manner and in an amount fixed  
 828 either by local Act or by the circuit public defender with the specific approval of the county  
 829 or counties ~~comprising~~ composing the judicial circuit.

830 (c) The circuit public defender shall report to the council the name, title, duties,  
 831 compensation, and benefit package of any employee or independent contractor authorized  
 832 under this Code section.

833 17-12-32.

834 The governing authority of any county or municipality within the judicial circuit which  
 835 provides additional personnel for the ~~office of~~ circuit public defender office may contract  
 836 with the council to provide such additional personnel in the same manner as is provided for  
 837 state paid personnel in this article. Any such personnel shall be considered state employees  
 838 and shall be entitled to the same fringe benefits as other state paid personnel employed by  
 839 the circuit public defender pursuant to this article. The governing authority of such county  
 840 or municipality shall transfer to the council such funds as may be necessary to cover the  
 841 compensation, benefits, travel, and other expenses for such personnel.



842 17-12-33.

843 (a) Any assistant public defender or other attorney at law employed full time by the circuit  
844 public defender who is compensated in whole or in part by state funds shall not engage in  
845 the private practice of law for profit or serve concurrently in any judicial office.

846 (b) Any assistant public defender or any other attorney at law employed by the circuit  
847 public defender shall be a member of the State Bar of Georgia and shall be admitted to  
848 practice before the appellate courts of this state. The assistant public defender shall serve  
849 at the pleasure of the circuit public defender and shall have such authority, powers, and  
850 duties as may be assigned by the circuit public defender.

851 17-12-34.

852 The governing authority of the county shall provide, in conjunction and cooperation with  
853 the other counties in the judicial circuit and in a pro rata share according to the population  
854 of each county, appropriate offices, utilities, telephone expenses, materials, and supplies  
855 as may be necessary to equip, maintain, and furnish the office or offices of the circuit  
856 public defender in an orderly and efficient manner. The provisions of an office, utilities,  
857 telephone expenses, materials, and supplies shall be subject to the budget procedures  
858 required by Article 1 of Chapter 81 of Title 36.

859 17-12-35.

860 A circuit public defender office may contract with and may accept funds and grants from  
861 any public or private source so long as the council approves of such contract or acceptance.

862 17-12-36.

863 (a) The council may permit a judicial circuit composed of a single county to continue in  
864 effect an alternative delivery system to the one set forth in this article if:

865 (1) The delivery system:

866 (A) Has a full-time director and staff and had been fully operational for at least two  
867 years on July 1, 2003; or

868 (B) Is administered by the county administrative office of the courts or the office of the  
869 court administrator of the superior court and had been fully operational for at least two  
870 years on July 1, 2003;

871 (2) The council, by majority vote of the entire council, determines that the delivery  
872 system meets or exceeds its policies as the council adopts;

873 (3) The governing authority of the county comprising the judicial circuit enacts a  
874 resolution expressing its desire to continue its delivery system and transmits a copy of  
875 such resolution to the council not later than September 30, 2004; and

876 (4) The governing authority of the county comprising the judicial circuit enacts a  
877 resolution agreeing to fully fund its delivery system.

878 (b) A judicial circuit composed of a single county may request an alternative delivery  
879 system only one time; provided, however, that if such judicial circuit's request for an  
880 alternative delivery system was disapproved on or before December 31, 2004, such judicial  
881 circuit may make one further request on or before September 1, 2005. The council shall  
882 allow such judicial circuit to have a hearing on such judicial circuit's request.

883 (c) The council shall make a determination with regard to continuation of an alternative  
884 delivery system not later than December 1, 2005, and if the council determines that such  
885 judicial circuit's alternative delivery system does not meet the requirements as established  
886 by the council, the council shall notify such judicial circuit of its deficiencies in writing and  
887 shall allow such judicial circuit an opportunity to cure such deficiencies. The council shall  
888 make a final determination with regard to continuation of an alternative delivery system  
889 on or before December 31, 2005. Initial and subsequent approvals of alternative delivery  
890 systems shall be by a majority vote of the entire council.

891 (d) Any circuit whose alternative delivery system is disapproved at any time shall be  
892 governed by the provisions of this article other than this Code section.

893 (e) ~~The In the event an alternative delivery system is approved, the council shall annually~~  
894 ~~review the operation of such any system authorized under this Code section and determine~~  
895 ~~whether such system is meeting the requirements as established by the council and is~~  
896 ~~eligible to continue operating as an approved alternative delivery system. In the event the~~  
897 ~~council determines that such system is not meeting the requirements as established by the~~  
898 ~~council, the council shall provide written notice to such system of the deficiencies and shall~~  
899 ~~provide such system an opportunity to cure such deficiencies. When such system has failed~~  
900 ~~to cure the described deficiencies within an 18 month period, the council may replace such~~  
901 ~~system as if such system had given notice of its intent to dissolve as set forth in subsection~~  
902 ~~(h) of this Code section.~~

903 (f) In the event an alternative delivery system is approved, it shall keep and maintain  
904 appropriate records, which shall include the number of persons represented; the offenses  
905 charged; the outcome of each case; the expenditures made in providing services; and any  
906 other information requested by the council.

907 ~~(g) In the event the council disapproves an alternative delivery system either in its initial~~  
908 ~~application or annual review, such system may appeal such decision to the council under~~  
909 ~~such rules and procedures as shall be prescribed by the council.~~

910 ~~(h)~~(g) An approved alternative delivery system shall be paid by the council, from funds  
911 available to the council, in an amount equal to the amount that would have been allocated  
912 to the judicial circuit for the minimum salary of the circuit public defender, the assistant

913 circuit public defenders, the investigator, and the administrative staff, exclusive of benefits,  
914 if the judicial circuit was not operating an alternative delivery system.

915 (h) A judicial circuit with an approved alternative delivery system may dissolve its system  
916 and operate a circuit public defender office by giving notice of its request to dissolve to the  
917 council. The council will work with the judicial circuit to implement such a request;  
918 provided, however, that due to budgetary requirements, such request may take as long as  
919 18 months to implement.

920 (i) The director of an alternative delivery system, by whatever name, shall not be  
921 considered to be a circuit public defender and shall not be entitled to the same benefits  
922 provided to an individual who otherwise serves as the head of a public defender office  
923 under this chapter. Any attorney who is employed in an alternative delivery system, by  
924 whatever name, shall not be considered to be a public defender and shall not be entitled to  
925 the same benefits provided to an individual who otherwise works in a public defender  
926 office under this chapter.

927 17-12-37.

928 This article shall become effective on January 1, 2005; ~~provided, however, that the council~~  
929 ~~and the circuit public defender selection panels shall be authorized to take administrative~~  
930 ~~actions as may be necessary or appropriate to prepare for and phase-in full implementation~~  
931 ~~of this article on or after December 31, 2003."~~

932 **SECTION 2.**

933 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.