



Department of Law, Criminal Division:

Sexual Assault Prosecutors Overview

- **Problem: Delayed Justice**
 - Alaska's sexual assault rate continues to be the highest in the country.
 - Alaska's sexual assault rate (148.7/100,000 people) is almost twice that of the state with the second highest rate (Arkansas at 77.2/100,000 people).
 - The Criminal Division has over 1,000 pending sexual assault and sexual abuse of minor cases. With approximately 250-300, *new* sex crime cases filed each year.
 - Prosecutors who focus on these types of cases experience a high level of **burnout**.
 - **High caseloads:** Average caseloads of 57-80 sexual assault and sexual abuse of minor cases.
 - It would take approximately 1,950 hours per year to work just 30 of these types of cases
 - There are 1,792 compensated hours per year.
 - **Vicarious Trauma:** This type of caseload continuously exposes the attorney to information that carries a high risk of causing vicarious trauma.
 - **Burnout** means higher rate of turnover for prosecutors working these cases, which, in turn, results in additional delays as new prosecutors have to step in and get up to speed on the cases.
 - The above impacts how long it takes to resolve sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases.

- On average it takes **2-3 years to resolve** (either at trial or by plea negotiations) sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases
- Delays in processing the case results in **delayed justice for victims**.

- **Proposal**

- The Governor's proposed budget contains a **\$3 million increment** to pay for 10 prosecutors and associated staff spread out across the state.
 - Juneau – prosecutor and paralegal
 - Nome – prosecutor, paralegal, law office assistant
 - Anchorage – 2 prosecutors, paralegal, law office assistant
 - Palmer – prosecutor, paralegal
 - Kenai – prosecutor
 - Fairbanks – prosecutor
 - Bethel – prosecutor, paralegal
 - Criminal Appeals/Special Litigation – 2 prosecutors, paralegal, law office assistant.
- These prosecutors will
 - focus on sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases;
 - bring the average caseload for these types of cases down to **approximately 40 per attorney (approximately half of the current highest caseloads)**;
 - assist in reducing burnout and turnover for prosecutors handling these types of cases;
 - allow for cases to be screened faster;
 - focus on improved communication with victims about their case; and
 - be able to work the case more aggressively which should result in **cases resolving faster** (trial and post-trial litigation).
 - **Achieving justice for victims in a more timely manner**