



## Texas Weighted Caseload Study

**The Texas Legislature has directed the Texas Indigent Defense Commission to conduct a Weighted Caseload Study:**

“for the purpose of determining guidelines for establishing a maximum allowable caseload for a criminal defense attorney that... allows the attorney to give each indigent defendant the time and effort necessary to ensure effective representation.”

**As the preeminent professional association of defense lawyers in Texas, TCDLA is a *crucial partner* in this effort. Representatives of TCDLA have been appointed to the Advisory Panel and other members will serve on the Delphi panel in the later stages of the project.**

**Documenting *what it really takes* to defend different types of cases will advance justice by moving policymakers toward data-driven decisions on indigent defense.**

- Builds objective evidence on defender resource needs in order to make the case for appropriate funding at the state and local levels
- Increases transparency about how indigent defense services are being delivered in Texas
- Positions criminal defense attorneys to provide higher quality services for court-appointed clients and be fairly compensated for their work

**TIDC is partnering with the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M (PPRI) to conduct the study. This fall, PPRI in coordination with TCDLA will begin recruiting attorneys to participate in the study.**

- Participants will be trained in the use of timekeeping software, then asked to record the time spent on cases for 12 weeks.
- As a “thank you” for participating attorneys, and to make it a little more fun, some incentives are planned. Everyone will receive a \$50 gift card for helping, and other giveaways are being developed. Consenting attorneys will also be recognized for their contributions in the final report.

**How TCDLA board members and attorneys can help:**

- Talk up the Weighted Caseload Project among colleagues – This is an opportunity to spotlight Texas indigent defense attorneys in an unprecedented way and make important gains for the profession.
- Volunteer – To be part of the project, just send an email to: [dottie@ppri.tamu.edu](mailto:dottie@ppri.tamu.edu). The study coordinator, Dottie Carmichael, will tell you what to do from there.
- Say “YES” – Beginning in early November, Texas A&M will begin contacting attorneys selected for the study. If you are given the opportunity to make this important contribution to your profession, please take it!