

## Wisconsin Public Defenders Demand Raises



The State Bar of Wisconsin and the state public defender's office are demanding a \$30 an hour increase in the pay for attorneys who volunteer to defend indigents.

Public defender Nick Chiarkis says the current \$40 an hour rate doesn't cover the overhead at even a small law firm. He claims the constitutional mandate to provide equal justice under the law isn't being fulfilled.

The average rate for a private attorney in Wisconsin is \$150 an hour.

Critics say increasing the attorneys' pay shouldn't be a priority during a recession.