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## **PD Shirk Alerts Vendors Reductions are Necessary During State Budget Crisis; Client Representation Won't be Compromised**

Jacksonville, FL: One of the three revenue sources that fund the 20 Public Defender Offices in Florida has been slashed 11.2% by the state government leaving Fourth Circuit Public Defender Matt Shirk and his counterparts to reduce expenditures within their agencies.

The Due Process Appropriation which funds necessary functions related to criminal trials such as court reporting, psychiatric evaluations, expert witness use and transcript generation among other things has been cut for the third year in a row. Public Defender Shirk has issued a letter dated February 18, 2010 to the dozens of vendors that assist his office with Due Process services.

“At our current rate of expenditures, we will be unable to meet all obligations through the end of this Fiscal year,” said Shirk. “We must reduce our costs associated with this appropriation. Effective immediately, we will reduce each bill we receive for services rendered on or after the date of this letter by 6%.”

Shirk offered Due Process vendors the ability to opt out of providing continued services to the Fourth Circuit Public Defender's Office. He indicated that the present vendors will either agree to the minimal reduction or he will obtain new vendors willing to work at the lower rate. Regardless, his office will continue to provide effective and thorough representation to his court-appointed clients.

“Times are tough for businesses these days,” said Shirk. “This reduction is necessary in order to meet our Constitutional obligations to the people of the State of Florida; our client representation will not be compromised. It is my intention that this reduction is temporary and I will notify you once funding is restored.”

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