

OFFICE OF THE STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER



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To: Montana Public Defender Commission

From: Kristina Neal, Conflict Coordinator

RE: Report to the Commission

UPDATES

Conflict cases: For the first half of FY 2015, I appointed counsel in 2,616 cases, which averages to approximately 22 cases per day. This is an increase in 260 cases above the case count for the same time period last year. The largest increases in new cases are coming from Region 4 (Helena) and Region 9 (Billings). In a positive turn, the number of DN cases, at least as referrals to my office, has stabilized. The spike in cases to my program has come from lower court cases. For example, in the same time frame last year, I received 897 lower court referrals. For the first half of FY 15, I received 1,267 lower court referrals.

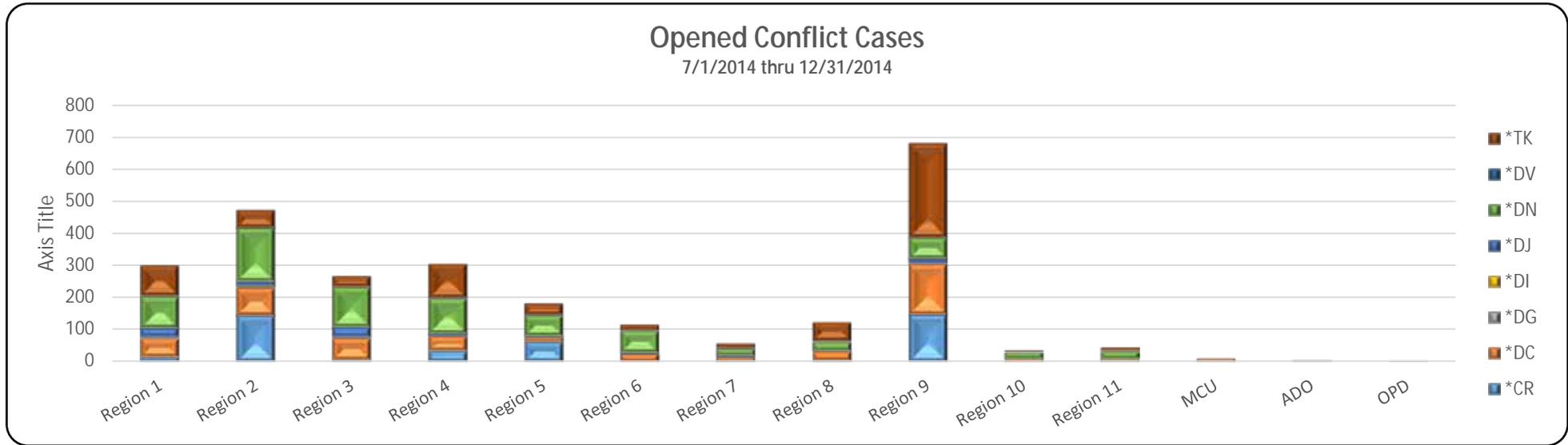
There has also been a significant increase in cases just this fiscal year. For the first quarter of this fiscal year, I appointed counsel in 1,240 cases. In the second quarter, I appointed counsel in 1,376 cases; an increase in 136 for the second quarter. I will continue to monitor these numbers to see if this increase represents a trend.

Budget Update: The Conflict Coordinator Office is staffed with me, two part-time assistants, and one conflict attorney. We have an anticipated budget for this fiscal year for \$3,609,408. It is anticipated that we will request approximately \$1.6 million in supplemental funding for projected shortfalls that are entirely related to caseloads and on-going contractor expenses. I have submitted to the legislature a proposed budget for FY 2016 and FY 2017 for slightly more than \$10 million dollars for the biennium. This is an increase from the FY 2014-2015 biennium of approximately 28%. This increase is attributable to increased caseloads. Additionally, this increase reflects on-going cases, specifically DN cases, which can carry-over numerous years.



Office of the State Public Defender: OPD Opened Conflict Cases by Type Report

Period from: 7/1/2014 through 12/31/2014



	*CR	*DC	*DG	*DI	*DJ	*DN	*DV	*TK	Total
Region 1	15	59	3	1	28	100	0	97	303
Region 2	143	88	1	4	15	168	0	56	475
Region 3	5	70	1	2	31	126	0	35	270
Region 4	34	47	0	0	8	111	0	107	307
Region 5	63	15	0	1	3	65	0	37	184
Region 6	0	25	0	0	4	70	0	18	117
Region 7	4	12	0	0	5	22	0	15	58
Region 8	4	29	2	0	1	28	0	61	125
Region 9	146	159	0	0	16	67	0	295	683
Region 10	0	10	0	0	1	21	0	4	36
Region 11	3	6	0	0	2	23	0	10	44
MCU	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
ADO	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
OPD	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	418	532	7	8	114	801	1	735	2,616