

HB 2513 -- ASSIGNED COUNSEL PILOT PROGRAM

SPONSOR: DeGroot

This bill replaces the public defender's office, for all cases other than appellate matters and in civil commitment proceedings based on an allegation that a defendant is a sexually violent predator, with an "Assigned Counsel Program", which will be a pilot program in Callaway, Cass, Jefferson, and Pettis counties. Prior to December 31, 2020, the Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA) must develop a plan for the administration of the program, with implementation to begin January 4, 2021. OSCA must also establish all necessary rules and regulations for the administration of the program, and the bill specifies some of the rules and regulations that must be included. The Missouri Supreme Court will exercise general supervision over the program.

The Assigned Counsel Pilot Program will allow attorneys licensed to practice law in Missouri to have their names added to a list of attorneys who will be appointed by the Missouri Supreme Court to represent eligible defendants. Prior to appointing counsel, the Supreme Court must categorize the offenses as Tier I or Tier II, described in the bill, and the court must also determine the qualifications of the counsel to ensure the charge or charges against the defendant do not exceed the qualifications of the assigned counsel.

By January 3, 2022, OSCA must provide a report to the Governor and to the General Assembly on the outcomes of the program and provide a recommendation regarding the expansion of the program statewide.

The provisions of the program sunset two years after the effective date.