

# PUBLIC DEFENDERS ARE NOT FAILING THE SYSTEM. THE SYSTEM IS FAILING THEM



## ABOUT THE STUDY



353

Public defenders across u.s.



2X

Surveys for 2 weeks



4000+

Survey responses



87

Qualitative responses

### KEY FINDINGS



82%

of defenders who want to leave are still passionate and feel called. The system is not losing its least committed people. **It is consuming its most dedicated ones.**

### THE GOOD NEWS: COMMITMENT



87%

of defenders view their work as a calling



81%

of days, defenders feel they made a difference



79%

of defenders believe they are good at what they do

### WARNING SIGNS: SEVERE STRAIN



55%

of evenings, defenders feel overload



65%

of all mornings, defenders wake up feeling burned out



72%

of defenders feel exploited by the system on most days

COMMITTED & SEVERLY STRAINED



**I HAVE 186 ACTIVE CASES... I WANT TO ADVOCATE FOR MY CLIENTS. BUT THE SYSTEM HAS MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE "**

--PUBLIC DEFENDER

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## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

01



REDUCE CASELOAD OVERLOAD

02



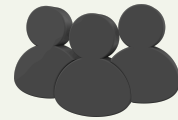
ADDRESS FINANCIAL STRAINS

03



MAKE GOOD DAYS COUNT

04



RECOGNIZE AND VALUE DEFENDERS



### THE BOTTOM LINE

This is NOT a resilience problem. This is a **structural problem**. And structural problems **require structural solutions**

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"I don't think public defenders burn out because they're too passionate. They burn out because they are assigned too many cases."

--PUBLIC DEFENDER

### JOIN THE SOLUTION



EMAIL US:  
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PARTICIPATE IN PHASE 2



SHARE THESE FINDINGS