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Bar Association**
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April 11, 2025

RE: Strong Support for Confirmation of Matthew Sanders as Director of the Department of Public Defense

Dear Chair Zahilay and Members of the King County Council,

The Loren Miller Bar Association (LMBA) proudly submits this letter in strong support of Matthew Sanders' confirmation as Director of the King County Department of Public Defense (DPD). Our support stems not only from Mr. Sanders' stellar qualifications and achievements as Interim Director, but also from our lived experience with his leadership, values, and deep-rooted commitment to the communities we serve.

In conversations with our Executive Board, Mr. Sanders demonstrated an exceptional grasp of what equitable public defense requires at this moment. He spoke directly to the implementation of WSBA's revised caseload standards—offering a data-driven, phased plan that prioritizes sustainability, attorney well-being, and due process. His case-weighted credit policy reflects the kind of strategic and principled thinking our communities need in a leader.

Mr. Sanders' inclusive hiring approach also resonated deeply with LMBA. He has made deliberate efforts to move beyond elite hiring pipelines, ensuring attorneys from local schools and historically marginalized communities have a seat at the table. His first incoming class as Interim Director reflects that vision: 43% are attorneys from historically excluded backgrounds, and 30% are local law graduates.

Importantly, we know Matthew Sanders. Over the past decade, he has been an LMBA member, mentor, and volunteer. He has helped shape and support the annual Charles V. Johnson Youth & Law Forum, mentored young attorneys, and remained active in community-centered leadership roles. His board service with Community for Youth and his advisory role with the UW Gates Public Service Law Program further reflect his unwavering commitment to mentorship and public service.

Mr. Sanders has already shown the ability to lead with clarity and calm through one of the most significant transitional periods in DPD's history. His recruitment successes, operational growth, and relationship-building across labor, staff, and county stakeholders reflect more than technical skill—they demonstrate executive maturity, foresight, and trust-building. These are not qualities easily taught; they are cultivated through years of consistent community-rooted service and personal integrity.

As an adjunct professor at Seattle University School of Law and a former public defense intern himself, Mr. Sanders has invested in the full ecosystem of public defense. He brings continuity, institutional knowledge, and a deep understanding of the people who make up the department. His commitment to local retention, long-term development of attorneys of color, and the preservation of DPD's core values position him to shape a more just and equitable future for public defense in King County.

For these reasons, and because of what we know of his heart, history, and vision, LMBA strongly urges the Council to confirm Matthew Sanders as Director of the Department of Public Defense. We stand behind him not only as legal professionals, but as a community confident in his ability to lead with justice, transparency, and courage.

Sincerely,

Sadie Houston
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