



OFFICE OF THE CARSON CITY PUBLIC DEFENDER

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April 4, 2024

Dear Chairman of the Interim Finance Committee and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my support for agenda item L, list L item 96 and the creation of the Law Student Supervision Operation (LASSO) program.

The Carson City Public Defender's Office has greatly benefitted from the enthusiasm and eagerness of law students. Last fall, we hired a University of Nevada Las Vegas William S. Boyd School of Law graduate -- who had previously interned with the Nevada State Public Defender's Office -- as a Law Clerk in our office. He was promoted to Deputy Carson City Public Defender upon successfully passing the State of Nevada bar examination. This past winter, a University of Virginia School of Law student interned with our office during her holiday break. She will return this summer as a limited practice practitioner and has accepted a preliminary offer of employment with our office contingent upon her graduation from law school and passing the Nevada bar. Additionally, a student intern from the University of California Davis School of Law will join our office in the Spring of 2025.

Ideally, we would appreciate having student interns and/or externs in our office year-round. Unfortunately, recruiting student interns and externs who do not have established ties in Carson City or the surrounding communities is increasingly difficult, as the cost of living and difficult housing market in Northern Nevada makes it cost-prohibitive for interested students to live and work in the area. Simply put, as a government agency with a limited budget, we cannot compete with the private defense and civil law firms across the country who can provide high-paying internships to law students.

This is why the Office of the Carson City Public Defender supports the efforts of the Department of Indigent Defense Services to create the LASSO program. The financial stipends offered to law students through LASSO will not only incentivize interest in indigent defense but will also create a smoother path for law students to enter public defense, thereby increasing the level of practice in our smaller jurisdictions and creating a stronger and more well-trained defense bar to better serve the indigent clients of our communities.

Sincerely,

CHARLES H. ODGERS
Carson City Public Defender

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