

IDS

Appointed Advocate

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IMPORTANT NEWS REGARDING PAC RATES



IDS is grateful that the General Assembly has recognized the need for additional PAC funding.

The IDS Commission will discuss raising rates at its August 7 regular meeting. We will stream the open/public part of the meeting. The meeting link will be posted here:

<https://www.ncids.org/commission-on-indigent-defense-services/>

While the Commission meeting will convene at 10 a.m., the Commission will immediately go into closed session to discuss the appointment of the new Executive Director. The rate hike discussion will be the first agenda item at the conclusion of the closed session.

[Click HERE to read the IDS News Item.](#)

Update on the Selection of the New IDS Executive Director

Following the announcement that IDS Executive Director Mary Pollard will retire in August, the Commission immediately began the search for her replacement.

By the August 7 IDS Commission meeting, all interviews will have been conducted, and the Commission will deliberate in closed session in their quarterly meeting on whom to appoint as the new director.

The name of the new director will likely be announced in a public meeting the week of August 10. For those meeting details, keep your eyes on the [IDS Commission webpage](#).

Tech Tip: Dealing with Digital Discovery

For attorneys working with large digital files—body cam footage, surveillance video, cell phone downloads, high-resolution photos, or other multi-gigabyte discovery productions—the hardware you use matters.



Even though the price for a solid state external hard drive (SSD) may be higher, using an SSD instead of a traditional spinning hard drive (HDD) can significantly improve workflow because of faster read/write speeds.

Why this matters in practice:

- Faster file transfers – Large discovery folders copy in minutes instead of hours.
- Quicker video review – High-resolution footage loads more smoothly.
- Improved trial prep efficiency – Exhibits open faster during prep (and less risk of awkward delays in court).
- Greater durability – SSDs have no moving parts, making them less vulnerable to damage when transported between office, court, and jail visits.

For cases involving digital evidence, investing in a quality SSD can reduce friction in your workflow and save meaningful time—especially when you're dealing with terabytes of data. Consider using a solid state drive to house large files you are actively working with. This will improve performance and keep disk space on your PC readily available. For long-term storage the traditional hard disk drives (HDD) are more economical.

HERE TO HELP: Office of Special Counsel

You are not alone; It's not just your district!



Pictured here are the staff who work in the Raleigh office. Front row from left to right: Attorney Becky Zogry, Attorney Lindsey Moore, Legal Assistant Chris Curbelo, and Legal Assistant Teresa Ray. Back row from left to right: Legal Assistant Kianna Swain, Chief Special Counsel J. Chad Perry, and Attorney Zac Thayer. (Not pictured from the Raleigh staff were attorneys Jenn Lucero and Tamzin Kinnett.) The OSC has additional staff who work in other locations including Butner, Goldsboro, and Morganton.

The Office of Special Counsel wants attorneys who defend clients in civil commitment cases to know:

We are in this together.

In districts all over North Carolina, defenders and legal teams are facing major issues and challenges, including:

- Long wait times for capacity evaluations
- Lack of beds/ long wait times for beds
- Voluminous discovery
- New Pre-Trial Release demands and
- Over-capacity facilities

If you are facing these challenges or others, the Office of Special Counsel can help. Do you need support, resources, guidance? Chief Special Counsel Chad Perry and staff stand ready to assist you with your clients. Reach out anytime for a consultation with a subject matter/legal expert.

[Link to OSC Website](#) | [Link to Staff Page](#)



J. Chad Perry was unanimously reappointed in May of this year by the Commission on Indigent Defense Services to serve a second four-year term as Chief Special Counsel for the state of North Carolina.

IDS is grateful to Chief Perry for serving in this critical role and ensuring that individuals facing involuntary commitment are represented with excellence, dignity and fairness.

Q&A With the Chief Special Counsel

Q: What are a few common misconceptions about civil commitment work that might keep attorneys from taking those cases? Can you debunk any myths about representing clients in civil commitment cases? And why do YOU do this work?

A: I think one of the biggest misconceptions is that civil commitment cases are somehow less important than other areas of the law. In reality, these cases involve some of the most significant liberty interests in our legal system. A person can be deprived of their freedom, and often their own medical decisions based on what happens in a commitment hearing.

Another misconception is that our clients are unwilling or unable to participate in their own representation. Although that is the case in many situations, there are still many people who are highly capable of articulating their expressed wishes regarding their hospitalization. Despite experiencing a mental health crisis, many of our clients still have goals, preferences, and concerns about their rights. For the attorneys who do this kind of work, our job is to listen, advocate, and ensure their voice is heard in a system that many of our clients do not understand.

When I first started out as a public defender in the Durham County Office, I had never imagined this area of practice until I was assigned to these cases. Being exposed to this work, I recognized the unique opportunity to stand beside people during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. Many of our clients feel powerless, isolated, and even afraid. The Office of Special Counsel believes in compassionate representation. My "why" is to protect the due process rights of our clients and to ensure that every person is treated with dignity and respect and afforded their rights guaranteed by law.

Q: How is Iryna's Law impacting courtrooms in North Carolina?

A: As Iryna's Law pertains to involuntary commitments, it is too early to tell what the law's impact will be. I could speculate that it may increase involuntary commitment caseloads. I can envision we will likely need more attorneys willing to do IVC cases. Practically speaking, I think that the law will likely increase expectations regarding both criminal defense and IVC attorneys' involvement and preparation. Right now, I think the broader impact is that it has elevated the conversation around the use of civil commitment and the profound consequences that exist in society due to inadequate mental health resources.

Q: Currently, there is no certification / area of specialization for civil commitment work. If an attorney is interested in representing clients for civil commitments, what steps can they take toward getting on a roster?

A: Any attorney interested in doing this work should begin by contacting their local public defender office or the Office of Special Counsel to learn more about opportunities and local needs. Take advantage of any resources located on the UNC School of Government's webpage regarding commitment and reach out to us. Our attorneys will gladly help answer questions you may have.

Here is the thing: No one that I know has ever gone to law school with the plan to do this kind of work. Beyond training and legal knowledge, a successful civil commitment attorney simply must have the heart to serve. It requires attorneys who practice law with empathy and are able to communicate effectively with people who are experiencing significant challenges. If you are a person who believes in client-centered advocacy, this field has a place for you. The legal issues can be learned. The civil commitment process can be taught. But what is needed most is to find compassionate advocates who are willing to do the work.

Q: How can the Office of Special Counsel help support the dedicated

practitioners who do this kind of work?

A: The Office of Special Counsel exists to support practitioners who take on these cases.

First, we help attorneys access the tools needed to effectively represent clients in commitment cases. Second, we are building a statewide network of attorneys who handle these types of cases. To my knowledge, there are approximately 50 IVC attorneys statewide. We want to build and expand upon this community of practitioners. Working together, we can identify challenges in the commitment system and work together with stakeholders to improve the process whenever possible.

But most importantly, we can remind attorneys that their work matters and keep fighting the good fight. Every day civil commitment attorneys are protecting the rights of our most vulnerable citizens in the most challenging of times. We work hard to support our clients, amplify their voices and make sure that they have excellent representation in court.

Join Us.

Do You Need Specific Help With a Case?

"You never have to practice alone."



IDS offers free case consultations to attorneys who defend indigent clients. We have some stellar IDS staff and other attorneys with whom IDS contracts with, who are excellent resources in the field. Some specialize in specific areas of the law including immigration, sex crimes, forensic evidence and more. **Click here for information or to schedule a case consultation / other support:** <https://www.ncids.org/get-help/consults/>

Since IDS either employs or contracts with most of the legal consultants, we welcome your input on how likely you are to recommend them to others or consult with them again in the future.

If you have worked with any of these consultants recently, please tell us about your experience with them on our new electronic feedback form:

[Consultant Recommendation Survey](#)

Friendly Reminders



OASIS is now statewide for certain case types. Currently, you need an account to bill for all your noncapital adult criminal fee apps.

[Click here to visit the OASIS webpage](#) where you can initiate the steps to acquire your login credentials.

Did you know...?

You can print your CLE records anytime using the NC State Bar



NORTH CAROLINA
STATE BAR

Portal: <https://portal.ncbar.gov/index.aspx>

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