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Court sides with accused criminals over attorneys

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LANSING: Court sides with accused criminals over attorneys

In a decision with potentially expensive implications for Michigan courts and taxpayers, a state appeals court panel has sided with indigent criminal defendants who claim the state's system for appointed counsel is inadequate and underfunded.

The court majority -- in a 2-1 decision released Friday -- said the accused criminals from Berrien, Genesee and Muskegon counties could proceed with their claim that lawyers appointed to defend them are often unprepared and overworked.

Advocates for reform say county-funded indigent defense in Michigan is among the worst in the country.

<http://www.freep.com/article/20090613/NEWS06/906130341/1008/NEWS/Court+sides+with+a+ccused+criminals+over+attorneys>