

Gov. Snyder appoints commission to improve legal representation for the poor

Published: Thursday, October 13, 2011, 3:19 PM Updated: Friday, October 14, 2011, 10:31 AM



By **Dave Murray | The Grand Rapids Press**

LANSING – A commission to investigate how to improve legal representation offered to low-income criminal defendants was created Thursday by Gov. Rick Snyder through an **executive order**.

Snyder said the commission is necessary because the quality of such representation varies greatly around the state.

“A core principle of our criminal justice system is to guarantee that an individual charged with a crime be entitled to legal representation, even if they are unable to hire private counsel,” Snyder said in a release. “The Commission will work to ensure that all criminal defendants receive effective assistance of counsel.”



Gov. Rick Snyder said the quality of legal defense for the poor varies across the state.

The 14-member Indigent Defense Advisory Commission is charged with recommending changes in the system, due to the governor and Legislature by July 15, 2012.

The commission is to be chaired by James Fisher of Hastings, former chief judge of Barry County Trial Court and former prosecuting attorney for the Barry County.

Lawmakers on the board are Sen. Bruce Caswell, R-Adams Township, Sen. Bert Johnson, D-Detroit, Rep. Tom McMillin, R-Rochester Hills and Rep. Ellen Cogen Lipton, D-Huntington Woods.

E-mail Dave Murray: dmurray@grpress.com and follow him on Twitter at twitter.com/ReporterDMurray

© 2011 MLive.com. All rights reserved.