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September 26, 2005

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Governor Mark Warner
Office of the Governor
P. O. 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Governor Warner:

I am writing on behalf of the Virginia State Bar Criminal Law Section Board of Governors to request that you include funding in your budget for substantial increases in court-appointed attorney fees. The Criminal Law Section has over 2,000 members across Virginia, including state and federal prosecutors, judges, law professors, and criminal defense attorneys.

Our section very much appreciates your understanding of this issue. We are aware that Chief Justice Hassell and other bar groups have also urged you to make increased court-appointed counsel compensation a budget priority.

In addition to increasing court-appointed counsel fees, we also urge you to give full consideration to additional resources for public defenders, including pay increases, new positions, and information technology funding. In that regard, last October the Virginia State Bar Council approved recommendations made by the Virginia State Bar Indigent Defense Task Force calling for significant increases in funding and resources for both court-appointed counsel and public defenders.

Thank you very much for your consideration of these requests. We appreciate your concern that the needs of both victims and defendants are provided

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fair and just treatment so that all Virginians have confidence in our state's criminal justice system.

Very truly yours,

HARVEY L. BRYANT, CHAIR
CRIMINAL LAW SECTION

HLB:jac

cc: Robert P. Crouch, Jr., Esquire