

# City perspective regarding WSBA caseload standard recommendation

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# City Concerns

- Cost →

- Current estimates range from increase of \$65M to \$400M annually, with average estimate of **\$150M increase** in annual cost statewide
- Lack of new revenue options/ability
- Cost would require cuts to therapeutic courts, diversion programs, peer navigators, crisis response specialists, and other human service programs designed to keep people out of the criminal justice system altogether

- Inadequate workforce →

- Particularly challenging in rural areas, exacerbating current challenges of “justice by geography” rather than helping eliminate those issues



# City Concerns

- Different current strengths and challenges with misdemeanor cases
- Creates problems where they do not currently exist →
  - A requirement for a designated supervising attorney with no caseload is not warranted in all circumstances, such as contract firms where attorneys average > 10 years of experience
  - Some contract firms have relationships with existing local agencies that provide social workers and similar support; there is not a need to have these individuals employed by the law firm
- Dismissal of cases →
  - More felony level crimes likely to be referred to municipal/district court
  - Cities unable to consistently and effectively prosecute misdemeanor cases including DV Assault IV, DUI, and others



# What cities need from the legislature

- **Partnership to increase workforce**
  - Law student loan forgiveness, additional internship programs, etc.
  - Related staffing, including social workers and prosecutors
- **Support city efforts to implement best practices** – including therapeutic courts, diversion programs, and co-responder teams
- **Funding and revenue tools**



Questions?

