

McMillin's Indigent Defense Bill Signed By Governor

Law creates commission to provide impartial counsel for needy defendants.

Posted by [John McKay](#) (Editor) , July 02, 2013 at 11:28 AM



Rep. Tom McMillin, R-Rochester Hills, right, is pictured at the PA 93 of 2013 bill signing with Gov. Rick Snyder, seated center. Photo credit: Courtesy photo.

Gov. Rick Snyder on Monday signed into law sweeping changes to Michigan's indigent defense system. [Public Act 93 of 2013](#), sponsored by Rep. Tom McMillin, aims to overhaul Michigan's system of providing access to the constitutional right of legal counsel for financially indigent citizens.

PA 93 of 2013 creates the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission which works to establish better guidelines for counties to provide poor criminal defendants with adequate and unbiased legal counsel and ensures those systems deliver indigent criminal defense services that meet constitutional requirements.

"This is an issue about liberty and the preservation of justice. We have a system in Michigan, that in many areas of the state carelessly permits, and we know has, locked away the innocent," said McMillin, R-Rochester Hills. "I am confident that under this law, Michigan will produce a system of oversight that ensures, as best as possible, that justice is administered evenly and fairly in our courts

and that all people have equal access to justice regardless of their economic place in society."

The commission created by the law will compile and review data for indigent defense services in Michigan, create standards to ensure statewide systems provide legal representation that meets constitutional requirements for effective assistance of counsel, gives the Michigan Supreme Court approval authority for any changes to the standards, and restructures the funding mechanisms to ensure programs are always adequately funded.

The law received bipartisan support as well as backing by the Michigan American Civil Liberties Union.