

1 AN ACT relating to the Department of Public Advocacy, making an appropriation
2 therefor, and declaring an emergency.

3 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

4 ➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 31 IS CREATED TO
5 READ AS FOLLOWS:

6 *Beginning with the 2024-2026 biennium, annual funding for the Department of Public*
7 *Advocacy shall be appropriated at an amount not less than seventy-five percent (75%)*
8 *of the annual combined general fund and restricted funds appropriations for the*
9 *Commonwealth's attorneys and county attorneys within the unified prosecutorial*
10 *system.*

11 ➔Section 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the public advocate is
12 authorized to spend up to \$500,000 of the funds appropriated to the Department of Public
13 Advocacy in fiscal year 2023-2024 for a Recruiting and Retention Program that may
14 include one-time payments to incoming or current employees of the department for the
15 purpose of improving the recruitment and retention of public defenders. Prior to any
16 expenditures, the public advocate shall file with the Legislative Research Commission a
17 detailed description of the program and the criteria for any expenditures. No later than 30
18 days after the end of the fiscal year, the public advocate shall file with the Legislative
19 Research Commission a detailed report listing all expenditures made through the program
20 in the prior fiscal year.

21 ➔Section 3. Whereas it is increasingly difficult to recruit qualified candidates for
22 employment at the Department of Public Advocacy, an emergency is declared to exist,
23 and Section 2 of this Act takes effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor or
24 upon its otherwise becoming law.