

Federal Defender Detailee Legislative Counsel 2026 United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary

The Ranking Member of the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Senator Dick Durbin, has again invited an Assistant Federal Public Defender to be detailed to Committee staff for not more than two years. **The detailee position scheduled to begin in January 2026 is available.** The detailee will focus on criminal justice, including legislation and executive branch oversight. The detailee will have the opportunity to participate in every stage of the legislative process. Responsibilities include evaluating pending and proposed legislation, drafting legislation and amendments, and briefing members and other legislative staff on pending legislation in meetings, memoranda, and letters. The detailee will also help plan, prepare for, and staff subject-matter and markup hearings by drafting memoranda, preparing hearing questions and statements, and coordinating witnesses. Other responsibilities may include preparing floor statements and meeting with stakeholders and advocates to discuss issues and legislation.

The Legislative Detail program is designed to benefit federal defenders by providing an in-depth view of the legislative process and exposure to the development of criminal justice law and policy, as well as an opportunity to hone a specialized set of legislative research, advocacy, and analytical skills. The program also enhances communication and expands the working relationship between Congress and the federal defender community.

Experienced AFPDs are encouraged to apply. Applicants must possess excellent oral and written communication skills. Applicants also must demonstrate the capacity to work effectively with others.

Prior to applying to the program, applicants must obtain the approval of their federal defender. Upon the request of a federal defender, additional funding may be provided to that office to support the hiring of a temporary replacement for up to one year. Funding is available for the detail and priority consideration will be given to backfill the position in the defender office.

The person selected for this temporary duty assignment will continue to be an employee of their respective federal defender office, which will continue to pay all salary and benefits. In addition to the regular salary, the detailee may receive a stipend for both housing in Washington and per diem while on the temporary assignment. A certain number of round-trips home will also be provided.

Please direct any questions to Jill Ginstling, National Sentencing Resource Counsel, at Jill_Ginstling@fd.org. Applications (cover letter, resume and writing sample) should be sent to Jodi Linker and Patricia Richman, Co-Chairs of the Federal Public Defender Legislative Committee, c/o Valerie Duckett at Valerie_Duckett@fd.org. This announcement closes on October 20, 2026.