

**The Law Office of The Public Defender**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1/22/2020**

Public Defender's Office Partners with Community to Bring New Criminal Justice Support Group to Dayton

**Dayton, OH, January 22, 2020:** On Wednesday, January 29th, The Law Office of the Public Defender will partner with Families of Addicts (FOA) to kick off a series of informational meetings about a powerful new model for reforming public defense and challenging mass incarceration: Participatory Defense.

Currently implemented in communities nationwide and pitched in Dayton during the 2019 UpDayton Summit, Participatory Defense is a support group designed to provide legal resources and education to those facing criminal charges, their families, and their communities. By empowering these groups with knowledge and support, the program aims to amplify their voices and encourage greater transparency, accountability and fairness in the criminal justice system. Nationally, Participatory Defense has positively impacted the outcome of cases and influenced changes to the balance of power in the courts.

The meeting will take place at the **Life Enrichment Center at 425 North Findlay St. Dayton, OH 45404 from 7:30 to 9:00 pm** and is open to the public. Attendees will receive an overview of Participatory Defense, a step-by-step explanation of the criminal justice process – from arrest to sentencing – and learn specific ways to advocate for the defendant during each step of the system.

"FOA is honored and excited to be a partner in the Participatory Defense program," says Lori Erion, Founding President & CEO of FOA. "The training and the resources we will be able to provide our families will be invaluable."

Additional meetings to start and maintain the program are currently in development with two additional community partners. These community partners, like FOA, will take over the operation and facilitation of their respective Participatory Defense groups, and The Law Office of the Public Defender will step into a liaison role after the initial training period.

"We are so excited to bring Participatory Defense to Dayton," says Kelli Howard, Deputy Public Defender for Montgomery County. "Other Participatory Defense hubs in the country have seen great success in both helping clients prove their innocence and in influencing sentencing, allowing clients to get probation or treatment instead of jail or prison time."

For more information about Participatory Defense, please visit [www.participatorydefense.org](http://www.participatorydefense.org).

**About the Public Defender's Office:** The Law Office of the Public Defender provides legal representation to citizens accused by the government of criminal conduct that can result in a loss of freedom. We defend cases including Felonies, Misdemeanors, Appeals, and Juveniles. We provide these legal services to all persons and base qualification decisions solely on economic status.