

PRESS RELEASE

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COURT RULES THAT KING COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDERS ARE ENTITLED TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PENSIONS

Kevin Dolan is a King County public defender. He has been a King County public defender for nearly 30 years. King County pays its public defenders through four King County Public Defense agencies organized as nonprofit corporations. Kevin Dolan filed a class action lawsuit in Pierce County Superior Court contending that because of the extensive control that King County exercised over the public defense agencies and the public defenders, he and the other King County Public Defenders and staff were actually public employees who should be entitled to public employee pensions under the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS).

Following a trial, the Honorable John R. Hickman ruled in favor of Dolan and the class on February 9th. Judge Hickman found that Dolan and the class members “should be considered public employees ... under the Washington PERS statute.”

A copy of Judge Hickman’s decision received by the plaintiffs today is set forth below.