

## State fails victims, defendants

Re: "Public defender faces contempt," Metro, Sept. 14.

Judge Frank Marullo is right: Under the Constitution, defendants are guaranteed the right to due process and a speedy trial. Victims deserve closure. And all Louisiana residents deserve to know that they are protected by a well-functioning justice system.

Unfortunately, under the current broken system, everyone is losing. But no one segment of the system — judges, prosecutors, defenders or law enforcement — is to blame. Real responsibility rests with the state of Louisiana, which has for decades been failing its constitutional obligation to provide adequate resources necessary for a fair and efficient system of jus-

tice.

It wastes far more time and money to operate a broken system than a fully functioning one. Ensuring that public defenders have the resources they need to prepare a fair defense protects all of us in the long run by preventing costly delays, lengthy appeals and wrongful convictions.

If Judge Marullo really wants to make a difference, perhaps he should consider holding our state leaders in contempt until they take the steps that are necessary to create a system that protects all Louisiana residents.

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