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Subject: FW: Writing in Support of the Public Defense Caseload Standards
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From: Ali Burton <aburton@snocopda.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 3:23 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Writing in Support of the Public Defense Caseload Standards

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Hello,

I am writing in support of the proposed public defense caseload standards. I have been a public defender for four years, and prior to that worked as a civil legal aid attorney representing survivors of domestic violence. The caseload standards must be lowered to ensure constitutionally sufficient representation to the thousands of people charged with crimes every year. As things stand, many accused people are not sufficiently represented in Snohomish County, the county I practice in. This is due to high caseloads, but also due to ineffective attorneys. Lowering the caseload standards will attract better public defenders and help prevent good ones from leaving the profession.

If these standards are not adopted, the only other option to ensure the constitution is being upheld is to require the state charge less cases. The system cannot keep relying on underpaid public defenders to work evenings and weekends, if they're even willing to do that, to provide an adequate defense. The Supreme Court and the State have a responsibility to ensure every defendant receives an effective defense; currently that is not happening. Please don't listen to the people saying this isn't necessary who have never been public defenders and have no idea what they're talking about.

Thank you,

Ali Burton
(she/her/hers)
Attorney
Snohomish County Public Defender Association
Office: (425) 212-2672
Cell: (425) 471-3597
2722 Colby Avenue, Suite 200
Everett, WA 98201

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