

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Indigent Defense Caseload Standards. Order Number 25700-A-1568
Date: Thursday, September 19, 2024 4:11:10 PM
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From: Andy Illyn <a.illyn@mukilteowa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 19, 2024 4:09 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Cc: Joe Marine <jmarine@mukilteowa.gov>
Subject: Indigent Defense Caseload Standards. Order Number 25700-A-1568

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I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Washington State Bar Association's recent proposals to reduce public defender caseloads by up to two-thirds. While I understand and appreciate the intention behind these changes, I firmly believe that lowering the standards is almost never the solution and will further harm victims in our state. Instead, we should look for resources to enhance the capabilities of public defenders in this state.

While aimed at alleviating the burden on public defenders, the proposed reduction in caseloads fails to address the root causes of the current challenges. Instead, it risks compromising the quality and trust of legal representation and, more critically, the pursuit of justice for victims. Lowering the caseload standards for public defense will ultimately lead to a justice system that is less responsive to the needs of Washington State.

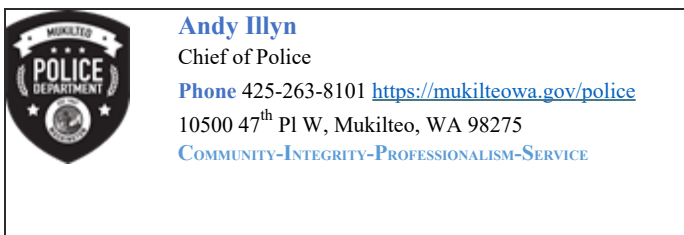
Multnomah County DA's Office has highlighted the public safety threat posed by the shortage of public defenders. Since February 2022, nearly 300 cases, including low-level assaults, domestic violence, property crimes, and firearm-related offenses, have been dismissed due to the lack of available defense lawyers. This situation sends a message to crime victims that justice is unavailable and to offenders that there is no accountability.

Victims of crime already face significant hurdles in their quest for justice. By reducing the number of cases public defenders handle, we risk creating a system where victims' cases are delayed or inadequately addressed. This not only undermines public trust in our legal system but also exacerbates the trauma experienced by victims who are seeking closure and justice.

Furthermore, the proposed changes do not consider the broader implications for public safety. An overburdened and under resourced justice system cannot effectively serve its purpose. We must seek solutions that enhance the capacity and efficiency of our public defense system without compromising the standards that ensure fair and timely justice for all parties involved.

I urge you to reconsider these proposals and explore alternative measures that address the workload challenges faced by public defenders without lowering the standards of our justice system. It is

imperative that we prioritize the needs of victims and uphold the integrity of our legal processes.



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