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Subject: FW: Public Comment on Standards for Public Defense
Date: Thursday, October 31, 2024 11:21:38 AM

From: Anne Dorshimer <annedorshimer@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2024 11:18 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Public Comment on Standards for Public Defense

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Hello,

My name is Anne Dorshimer, I am a licensed attorney with WSBA number 50363.

With this email I urge the Washington Supreme Court to adopt the proposed changes to the Court's adopted standards for public defense.

I am a 7th year commercial litigator at a large firm in downtown Seattle. As with other similarly situated senior associate attorneys in Seattle firms, my yearly billable hour requirement is 1850 in addition to the hundreds of hours of non billable work that I perform for the firm each year. I work hard but I am well compensated.

I don't say this to brag, rather I say this to set the scene for the following: my husband is a Washington public defender with 10 years experience. He works in a private firm that contracts with counties and municipalities to provide public defense. My husband takes public defense contract work in Mason, Grays Harbor, and Kitsap Counties. We've been together since 2018 and I've been able to observe him closely during this time (obviously). There is absolutely no doubt that he works longer hours than me, every week, every month, and every year. The flow of cases is relentless for him. His phone and email are constantly bombarded with messages related to his caseload. He is in court most days of the week, yet somehow expected to get all of this work done. He cannot turn off his phone or step away from his cases for hardly even one day. A 1 week or 2 weeks' vacation is completely out of the question. He works every weekend and most week nights.

It is truly unsustainable for him. It is a tragedy for public defense. It saddens me to see how much he loves public defense (he went to law school knowing that this was what he wanted to do). He is brilliant at it. And yet, he may be forced to leave public defense in the near future if it doesn't

change. I know his caseload, passion for public defense, and yet total burnout, is comparable to most if not all of the public defenders whom we know.

Lastly—in response to those who have argued against the changed standards, claiming that it is a budget issue, this is absolutely incorrect. Constitutional issues are never to be confused with budget issues. If the constitution is being violated, it must be remedied and the budget will be resolved after. This does not make light of the budgetary issues, which are considerable for municipalities like those where my husband works. But the constitution is the supreme law of the land. For analogous examples, the court could look to federal courts. If there is a ruling that a jail or prison violates the constitution, but there is not funding or infrastructure to remedy the situation, the federal court will put the prison or jail into a receivership. I recall that this has happened with a Guam prison/jail before, and here is a news clip for a prison/jail in Mississippi:



[Receiver appointed to remedy 'unconstitutional conditions' at Mississippi jail](#)
corrections1.com

In sum, please adopt the changes to the standard. If you need anything else from me please do not hesitate to email me.

Thank you,

-Anne Dorshimer

Sent from my iPhone