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Subject: FW: CrR 3.1 and CrRLJ 3.1 Comment
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From: April Brees <Abrees@masoncountywa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2024 6:06 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: CrR 3.1 and CrRLJ 3.1 Comment

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Honorable Justices:

I respectfully ask that you enact the proposed changes to CrR 3.1 and CrRLJ 3.1 and enact the decreased caseload standards for public defenders.

I work as a public defender in a rural western Washington county which is exactly where I want to be. I went to law school so I could serve the communities where I grew up and I'm so thankful for every day that I get to do this work. I usually take work home with me every night and on the weekends, and while part of it is because I love the work I do, another part of it is because there is never enough time in the day to do everything that I need to do. I spend hours in court almost every day on matters I'm not assigned to such as arraignments and review hearings. In addition, I spend a lot of time in jails visiting people I'm not assigned to before in-custody hearings. I have very little time weekdays between 8am and 5pm to meet with my own clients and work on my cases. My clients deserve an attorney who is available to them for more than a two-hour window once a week. My clients deserve an attorney who doesn't have to regularly prepare for appearances on evenings and weekends. My clients deserve an attorney who can dedicate time for continuing legal education and trainings besides the minimum requirements necessary for maintaining a license to practice. The current rate at which public defenders are asked to represent cases is unsustainable and it disadvantages our clients in obvious ways. To support public defenders and ensure that every public defense client gets an attorney who can provide them the representation they deserve please enact the proposed changes to CrR 3.1 and CrRLJ 3.1 and enact the decreased caseload standards for public defenders.

Thank you,
April Brees
Deputy Public Defender,
Mason County Public Defender's Office

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