

Dear Washington Supreme Court,

I am writing to ask you to please support reduced caseload standards. I am a paralegal in King County. I love my job and I love doing my very best work for my clients, however due to current caseloads it is humanly impossible for me.

We desperately need more support. Our entire office has needed caseload relief for decades. Every time an attorney burns out and leaves my office, everyone's volume of work increases even more, and our clients suffer.

I reassure myself daily that it is not humanly possible to get done all the work I need to do. Recently I learned about the concept of 'moral injury.' How my coworkers and I are put in an impossible situation where we have to constantly juggle emergent demands while the stakes are so high, and when peoples' liberty and lives are on the line. It is extremely difficult for us to do our jobs effectively under the current caseload standard. While our clients suffer the most, we are also harmed in this process. We agonize over tasks not completed, and the physical limits of our bodies and being a human.

Due to the lack of reduced caseload standards in public defense, many of our clients receive reduced legal representation, which is the hidden cost that the public never sees, and politicians feel no impetus to fix. Unlike most legal practice areas, public defense requires stringent requirements to ensure that the government doesn't go back on Gideon's Promise. It is part of your important role in WA State to ensure that our residents receive their 6th Amendment rights.

Again, I love my job. Many, many years ago, I made the right decision that public defense is the most noble of causes. The cause to which I knowingly decided to dedicate my personal life and professional career to improve. I have a deep commitment to my clients and my coworkers, but

this is not sustainable. Please, we cannot wait for years of discussion and slow movement, we need help now. Please accept the proposed rules.

Thank you for listening,

Arnold Prado

The Supreme Court

State of Washington



June 4, 2020

Dear Members of the Judiciary and the Legal Community:

We are compelled by recent events to join other state supreme courts around the nation in addressing our legal community.

The devaluation and degradation of black lives is not a recent event. It is a persistent and systemic injustice that predates this nation's founding. But recent events have brought to the forefront of our collective consciousness a painful fact that is, for too many of our citizens, common knowledge: the injustices faced by black Americans are not relics of the past. We continue to see racialized policing and the overrepresentation of black Americans in every stage of our criminal and juvenile justice systems. Our institutions remain affected by the vestiges of slavery: Jim Crow laws that were never dismantled and racist court decisions that were never disavowed.

The legal community must recognize that we all bear responsibility for this on-going injustice, and that we are capable of taking steps to address it, if only we have the courage and the will. The injustice still plaguing our country has its roots in the individual and collective actions of many, and it cannot be addressed without the individual and collective actions of us all.

As judges, we must recognize the role we have played in devaluing black lives. This very court once held that a cemetery could lawfully deny grieving black parents the right to bury their infant. We cannot undo this wrong—but we can recognize our ability to do better in the future. We can develop a greater awareness of our own conscious and unconscious biases in order to make just decisions in individual cases, and we can administer justice and support court rules in a way that brings greater racial justice to our system as a whole.


As lawyers and members of the bar, we must recognize the harms that are caused when meritorious claims go unaddressed due to systemic inequities or the lack of financial, personal, or systemic support. And we must also recognize that this is not how a *justice* system must operate. Too often in the legal profession, we feel bound by tradition and the way things have “always” been. We must remember that even the most venerable precedent must be struck down when it is incorrect and harmful. The systemic oppression of black Americans is not merely incorrect and harmful; it is shameful and deadly.

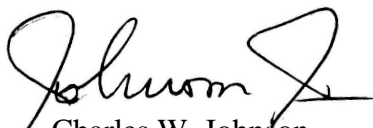
Finally, as individuals, we must recognize that systemic racial injustice against black Americans is not an omnipresent specter that will inevitably persist. It is the collective product of each of our individual actions—every action, every day. It is only by carefully reflecting on our actions, taking individual responsibility for them, and constantly striving for better that we can address the shameful legacy we inherit. We call on every member of our legal community to reflect on this moment and ask ourselves how we may work together to eradicate racism.

As we lean in to do this hard and necessary work, may we also remember to support our black colleagues by lifting their voices. Listening to and acknowledging their experiences will enrich and inform our shared cause of dismantling systemic racism.

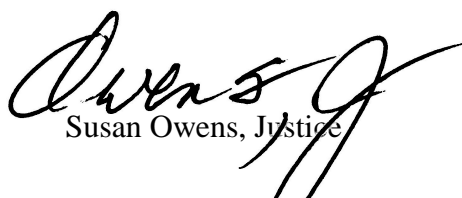
We go by the title of “Justice” and we reaffirm our deepest level of commitment to achieving justice by ending racism. We urge you to join us in these efforts. This is our moral imperative.

Sincerely,


Debra L. Stephens,
Chief Justice

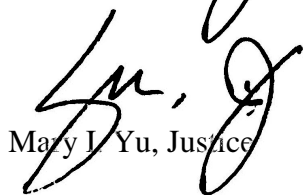

Charles W. Johnson,
Justice


Barbara A. Madsen,
Justice

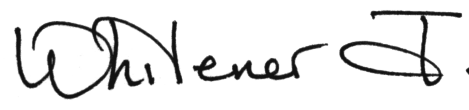

Susan Owens, Justice


Steven C. González,
Justice


Sheryl Gordon McCloud,
Justice


Mary I. Yu, Justice


Raquel Montoya-Lewis,
Justice


G. Helen Whitener, Justice

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Support Reduced Caseload Standards - Rules
Date: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 2:04:40 PM
Attachments: [AP letter to the WA Supreme Justices.pdf](#)
[Judiciary Legal Community SIGNED 060420.pdf](#)
Importance: High

From: Prado, Arnold <Arnold.Prado@kingcounty.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 1:47 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Cc: Prado, Arnold <Arnold.Prado@kingcounty.gov>
Subject: Support Reduced Caseload Standards - Rules
Importance: High

You don't often get email from arnold.prado@kingcounty.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)
External Email Warning! This email has originated from outside of the Washington State Courts Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, **DO NOT DO SO!** Instead, report the incident.

Dear Washington Supreme Court,

I am writing to ask that you please support reduced caseload standards and reject the counter proposed idea of reduced legal representation for our indigent clients. My plea is attached, entreating you to accept the proposed reduced caseload standards rules. We are part of the legal community striving for better that you addressed in your June 4, 2020, letter. Attached.

Respectfully,

Arnold Prado
DPD TDA Paralegal
Family Defense Unit
The Defender Association Division
King County Department of Public Defense
710 Second Ave, Suite 700
Seattle, WA 98104
PH: 206.477-8700 (main office)
PH:206.477.8766 (direct)
Fax:206.447.2349 (main office)
Fax: 206.447-3990 (FDU Fax)