

August 3rd, 2024

Dear Supreme Court Justices,

Thank you for your service to our state. I am writing in response to the call for comments on the proposed amendments to court rules that would limit the maximum case loads of public defenders. I don't know enough to understand the intentions of those who propose the changes. Is it simply to take pressure off public defenders without regard to the other consequences of such an idea? Slashing case loads will most likely not force all districts in Washington State to increase their budgets and hire more attorneys, it will most likely cause the courts to dismiss cases to comply with the rule.

How would this work out for public safety? In California, they have done similar things, refusing to prosecute petty theft. The result is an unruly society where thieves know they won't be prosecuted. San Francisco has earned a terrible reputation for this. Do we desire the same for our cities? This is a bad idea.

If the Washington State Bar and the Council on Public Defense desire improvements to case loads, they should put their efforts into lobbying districts to solve the problem through civic leadership to hire more public defenders. Changing the rules ~~may~~ might move some districts to hire more, but other district will just release criminals to re-offend. That does not make our state, our cities, our towns better places to live. Please reject this idea.

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