

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Public Defender Caseloads
Date: Wednesday, October 23, 2024 3:07:28 PM

From: Bridget Carragher <bcarra@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2024 3:04 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Public Defender Caseloads

You don't often get email from bcarra@gmail.com. [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 Justices of the Washington Supreme Court,

I am writing to ask you to reconsider the current regulations concerning public defender caseloads and to adopt the newly passed standards from the Washington State Bar Association, which offer much-needed improvements.

A public defender I know personally has explained that, under the present guidelines, they are only able to dedicate around 12 hours to each felony case. I have seen the incredible commitment and effort this public defender puts into advocating for her clients and ensuring they receive fair representation. Expecting such thorough and meaningful work to be done in such a limited timeframe is not only unrealistic but also jeopardizes clients' constitutional rights.

It is also important to consider how this affects the defenders themselves. The public defender I know is deeply passionate about her work and strives to serve her clients to the best of her ability. However, the pressure created by the current system pushes her, and her fellow defenders to the edge, as she is forced to work under conditions that make it nearly impossible to do her job properly.

This not only impacts her well-being and that of her colleagues, but it also threatens the effectiveness of the public defense system as a whole. By easing caseloads, public defenders would have the opportunity to provide better, more comprehensive support to their clients, including linking them with vital services such as mental health and addiction treatment, which could help prevent future legal entanglements.

The Court now has the chance to take a significant step toward improving our legal system by embracing the revised standards from the Washington State Bar Association. Doing so would bring our practices more in line with the constitutional principles we are all committed to upholding.

Thank you for considering this important matter.

Sincerely,
Bridget Carragher