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To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Proposed changes for Public Defense Caseloads
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Subject: Proposed changes for Public Defense Caseloads

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I support reducing the work loads for public defenders and establishing case load standards for support staff.

The opposition's argument that lower case loads will lead to vigilante justice are a stretch. We still have laws against vigilantism.

24 years ago, I knew a public defender who quit because of an impossible work load and poor pay. The man was smart and conscientious, but he couldn't live on the salary he was paid, and he felt that he was ethically unable to provide the service his clients needed. I also worked in mental health, another radically under-funded field with impossible work loads. I felt the same way in my profession. Because of this, I know that overwhelmed workers usually go to the quickest, easiest solution out of necessity. That's the one that takes less time, but it isn't always the right solution.

Not only do caseloads need to be reduced for public defenders, but standards for support staff are needed so that the work load doesn't get pushed off onto people with even lower wages and less ability to stand up for themselves.

When people are continually overwhelmed by huge work loads, they become less efficient and are unable to do the quality of work needed in such a critical field. People can't get their constitutional rights to representation when their advocate is so exhausted that they can't function. That's as bad as no representation at all.

Carrie Parks,
Vancouver, Wa