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**To:** [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Comment on proposed changes to the standards for indigent defense  
**Date:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 2:32:24 PM

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**From:** Chris Petroni <Chris@washapp.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 2:09 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** Comment on proposed changes to the standards for indigent defense

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To the Clerk of the Supreme Court,

I write to express support for the WSBA's proposed amendments to the trial-level indigent defense standards. I am a staff attorney at the Washington Appellate Project. I also am a new appointee to the King County Public Defense Advisory Board, which oversees the King County Department of Public Defense. I submit this comment solely on my own behalf.

That the current caseload standards are untenable cannot seriously be disputed. At each advisory board meeting I have attended, I have heard reports that talented, highly qualified attorneys are leaving the Department of Public Defense in droves because of their unmanageable workloads. Reducing caseloads to a sustainable level is a long overdue change.

Opposition to the change from prosecuting agencies and municipalities appears to be based on budget concerns, and not on any argument that public defenders can provide adequate representation under the current standards. The constitution does not permit counties to prioritize their budgets over every accused person's right to the effective assistance of counsel.

I urge the Court to adopt the proposed amendments.

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