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**Subject:** FW: Comment in Support of Proposed Standard for Indigent Defense  
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**From:** Byrne, Colin <cbyrne@kingcounty.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 3:58 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** Comment in Support of Proposed Standard for Indigent Defense

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Dear Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court,

I am writing to strongly urge you to adopt the proposed court rule to codify WSBA's Criminal Caseload Standards for Public Defenders. These caseload standards are essential to protecting and improving the rights of not just the most marginalized and vulnerable in our communities, but everyone in Washington.

I have been working as an attorney in public defense for the past 1.5 years. I fear that if these standards are not adopted I will not be able to continue this job without serious detrimental effects to myself and my clients. I often find myself talking with my colleagues about when the burnout will catch up with us. I regularly discuss with my wife how, in order to fulfill my responsibilities to each of my clients, I will have to miss a family function, or work late into the evening, over the weekend, or during my time off - time that we would normally spend together. If these standards do not change I do not know how long myself or my colleagues will last.

All clients deserve a thorough defense involving well researched legal issues, and full and careful review of discovery. It takes time to build trust and rapport with clients so we can have frank discussions about their case and their liberty interests. I see my colleagues striving to provide this constitutionally required representation daily, but with the current caseloads we are often forced to triage cases and issues and are unable to give each of our clients the time, attention, and care that they deserve.

After listening to the public comment regarding the adoption of these caseload standards it is incredibly disheartening to hear the bulk of the commentary against the standards boil down to costs. This Court cannot permit our Constitution or the fundamental values of justice and fairness to be made subservient to fiscal concerns.

I respectfully request that this Court enact meaningful case load standards that will help ensure that all persons in Washington have access to effective counsel, regardless of their ability to pay.

**Colin Byrne**

*Attorney*

*King County District Court*

Pronouns: he/him

King County Department of Public Defense

Associated Counsel for the Accused Division

420 W. Harrison St., Ste. 201

Kent, WA 9803"

206-477-8721 (Office)

206-388-9746 (Cell)

253-520-6635 (Fax)

[cbyrne@kingcounty.gov](mailto:cbyrne@kingcounty.gov)

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