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From: Heather Wolfenbarger <hwolfenbarger@snocopda.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2024 4:27 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Comments on new Public Defense Standards

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Good afternoon,

I have been a criminal defense attorney for over a decade and a practicing attorney for over 20 years. I'm writing in support of the new Public Defense Standards. If the appropriate resources are put towards making these standards achievable (e.g., hiring additional attorneys and support staff), then they will reduce burn out among PDs while providing higher quality representation to our clients.

Right now, it feels like I need at least three people to do all that my current caseload entails: One to make phone calls and visit with clients. One to research and review discovery. And one to prepare for motions and trials, not to mention the actual court appearances. If I devote time to one of these areas, then the others necessarily receive less attention. This can lead to stress for both attorney and client. It can lead to breakdowns in the attorney-client relationship. A meaningful approach to caseloads could make all the difference.

When the criminal justice system is truly a functional justice system, it benefits us all and promotes community safety and the integrity of the Court.

Thank you very much,

Heather Wolfenbarger (she/her/hers)
Attorney

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