

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Standards for Indigent Defense - Comment
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Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2024 4:03 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
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I have been a public defender in Jefferson County for nine years. I support the suggested amendments to the standards for indigent defense. I add my voice to the chorus that the current regime assigning three times the number of cases an attorney can handle competently is dysfunctional, disrespectful, corrodes our system of justice, and hurts the welfare of defenders themselves. The amendments correct this wrong.

I question the inclusion of the following language in the caseloads limit section on page 13:

“If a case resolves relatively quickly, before an attorney has done significant work on the matter, the attorney will be credited with a proportional, reduced amount of the credits initially assigned.”

The “relatively quickly” and “significant work” language is subjective, and I fear that county contracts would exploit this language to increase caseload limits for lesser valued cases. Like DWLS 3, for example. Those cases require significant attorney time on the phone with DOL, motions to remit debt in counties across Washington State, and negotiations with law offices holding civil collision judgments. Public defenders rarely have time for this. If such cases were pre-weighted through this subjective “relatively quickly” & “significant work” standard my fear is that the status quo would continue.

As well, the “relatively quickly” and “significant work” language cuts against attorney retention because it assigns less points to the the work of experienced attorneys who are more likely to expeditiously resolve some cases.

Thank you,

Jack Range