

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Support of Revised Defense Caseload Standards
Date: Friday, September 13, 2024 2:04:31 PM

From: Wicks, Jeffrey <jwicks@kingcounty.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 2:02 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Support of Revised Defense Caseload Standards

External Email Warning! This email has originated from outside of the Washington State Courts Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, **DO NOT DO SO!** Instead, report the incident.

Your Honors –

I am writing in support of the adoption of the revised case load standards for Public Defense.

As a career public defender in multiple states I have experienced first hand the impact of high case loads on the ability to provide the best possible defense in cases, as well as the burnout that it leads to among my fellow defenders. For decades, Public Defender's across the country have been raising the alarm for a crisis in the making. As cases have become more and more complex and the amount of discovery in even the "small" cases has ballooned, the alarm has become reality.

We repeatedly hear that the revised standards will grind the system to a halt due to there not being enough attorneys to handle the cases. This claim ignores two important facts. First, the system is already grinding to a halt by the fact that there simply is not enough time in the day to do all the work required on the cases as they are. Second, many qualified attorneys have become burnt out and have left public defense which further slows the system down (I myself have reached that point and am only hanging on due to the thought that I may be able to do the job I love in a meaningfully way with reduced a reduced caseload and the time I really need to develop a rapport with my clients and to work up their case) Third, survey after survey have shown that many new attorneys who are interested in a career in public defense bypass it due to the caseloads that the inability to have a work life balance. The revised caseload standards open the door for new attorneys to feel that public defense is a profession where they can make a difference and still have personal time that is not consumed by their work.

Calls for studies about more funding from the state, having prosecutors reevaluate what they charge and what they offer to resolve cases, and bringing in private attorneys to handle cases have all been options and suggestions for the decades this crisis has developed. Only now that a real and meaningful change is on the table are people really willing to at the least pay lip service to those

ideas. All of these suggestions are worthy of evaluation but should be done so not in place of the revised standards but simply as a matter of course.

You will I am sure receive many objections from prosecutors and judges. These are people with an interest in convictions and moving things along for the purposes of efficiency. Their objections are based on personal preference and not on the actual work and stress of the work of a public defender. I ask that you strongly consider the comments you will receive from my fellow defenders who work day in and day out to honor the Constitution and it's mandate for legal counsel for those who cannot afford an attorney. We have been crying into the wind for decades, please now, hear our voices

Jeffrey D. Wicks
Attorney
Northwest Defenders Division
King County Department of Public Defense
124 4th Ave, Suite 100
Kent, WA 98032

206-263-8632 (direct)
206-514-7754 (cell)

Fax 206-674-4702
TTY Relay 711