

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Please pass the revised caseload standards
Date: Thursday, September 5, 2024 8:10:16 AM

From: Jessamine Anderson <jessaminea@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 6:39 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Please pass the revised caseload standards

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Good evening Justices,

I'm writing to urge you to pass the revised case load standards for Washington State public defense. I have been a public defender for merely a year and it is entirely unsustainable. Even with a misdemeanor caseload, I work 60 hours a week, and often more. I have gotten sick multiple times already from stress but I have to keep working through these illnesses because other attorneys have too many cases to handle mine. My clients suffer. I am unable to fully investigate and litigate cases because there are just too many. This is unfair to our community members who rely on public defense as their only protection from the immense power of the government.

I desperately want to do this work for my entire career. At this current pace, I don't know if that's possible. My relationships with friends and family have become strained as I miss events while stuck at the office and as I am so drained and traumatized from work that I am emotionally unavailable to support them. My loved ones notice, and they worry about our public defense system: Who allowed the system to get to the point that it is at? Are they willing to begin to fix it, even if that takes drastic measures?

Clients should not have to accept that they will receive a lower standard of representation because they are indigent. And yet, that is what happens every day. Clients apologize for calling me because they know I am busy. This is unacceptable, and this stereotype of public defense needs to be changed immediately. We should not be forced to represent our community's most vulnerable people in such terrible work conditions.

I know this is just the tip of the iceberg. But I also know that this is a new issue - caseloads haven't always been so high. Because the government is choosing to fight crime by increasing punitive measures and ramping up policing, the government must fully support that method of fighting crime and fund public defense.

Please fix this. Pass these standards. Public defense in Washington *will* collapse, and after that happens, the system will become much more expensive to fix.

With respect and hope,
Jessamine Anderson