

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Support for the 2023 National Public Defender Workload Standards
Date: Friday, October 18, 2024 10:50:41 AM

From: John Chase <jchase@snocopda.org>
Sent: Friday, October 18, 2024 10:43 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Support for the 2023 National Public Defender Workload Standards

You don't often get email from jchase@snocopda.org. [Learn why this is important](#)
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.

Honorable Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court
Temple of Justice
Email: supreme@courts.wa.gov.

Dear Honorable Justices,

Subject: Support for the 2023 National Public Defender Workload Standards

I am writing to express my strong support for the adoption of the 2023 National Public Defender Workload Standards. I have worked at the Snohomish County Public Defender Association since 2021 after previously working more than nine years as an intern, certified intern, deputy public defender and senior deputy public defender in Colorado.

The 2023 standards are a necessary and proportionate response to the crises facing public defense.

Under the current standards of 150 felonies a year, a lawyer has less than 11 hours per felony case according to the Washington Defenders Association. That is unacceptable. From experience, I can tell you that a major trial of a homicide case can take a month or approximately 120 hours in trial time alone. That does not include the time needed to review voluminous discovery regularly consisting of thousands of pages and hours of body camera footage; to study complicated subject matters that require expert testimony and prepared direct and cross examinations; to meet with clients extensively before their life changing trial or to interview dozens of witnesses before trial. When I hear about the counties where attorneys are at or exceeding their maximum 150 felonies a year, I know = those attorneys are working in a system that ensures they will fail.

The proposed standards will have a meaningful and positive impact instead. They will reduce the cost of incarcerating accused people pretrial who have been convicted of nothing and the wrongfully convicted people in prison. The toll those incarcerations have on the individuals, their families and our communities are incalculable. There is a generational impact we see of young people accused of crimes, after they have come from broken homes or lived lives of abuse, which is tragic and cyclical. By supporting these basic standards to provide ample social workers, for example, there will be a

mechanism to help people up across Washington and not merely a system that keeps them down.

So many clients and people we meet have never experienced support in their lives. Their childhoods were pain. Their vision of the future cannot exceed a few days, or maybe a week. But in my experience, representing thousands of people charged with all levels of offenses for over 10 years, people are good. People do not want to live toxic or destructive lives. The people of our communities want to overcome the negative cycles they have known, but they need basic levels of help and support. The defenders giving their careers to provide for these people need help and support too.

Adopting the standards set forth for administrative support, investigator staffing, social workers, training, technical support, supervision, and manageable caseload standards will ensure that our criminal system is prepared for the challenges of the future and avoid inequities of the past. These standards will mean the constitutional right to effective assistance of counsel in the state of Washington is not a phrase, but a guarantee of a fair and balanced criminal system. These standards will also provide consistency across Washington, so that effective assistance does not hinge on county lines. Adopting these standards are a matter of doing what needs to be done.

Thank you in advance for considering this input and for adopting these much-needed standards.

Sincerely,

John Chase (*he.him.his*)

Staff Attorney

Snohomish County Public Defender Association

2722 Colby Avenue, Suite 200

Everett, WA 98201

Direct Phone: 425-212-2598

Work Cell: 425-471-3619

Office Phone: 425-339-6300, Extension 538

Fax: 425-339-6363

Website: www.snocopda.org

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email may contain confidential information and is intended only for the individual named. If you are not the intended recipient, you should not read, disseminate, distribute or copy this email. If you believe you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately and delete this email from your system.