

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Comment on Public Defense Caseload Standards
Date: Tuesday, September 17, 2024 11:33:18 AM

From: Kari Boyum <kboyum@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2024 11:24 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Comment on Public Defense Caseload Standards

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I write to urge this Court to adopt the rule reflecting the caseload standards recently passed by the WSBA. I write in my personal capacity, and I am an attorney who has worked in public defense for the last 18 years. As you all know, these proposed standards are long overdue. Public defenders, across the state, have suffered from crushing caseloads. This has manifested in the widespread burnout and turnover we see, prolonged waits for our clients to resolve their cases, and prolonged incarceration due to these waits. These proposed standards represent a path forward that would provide our clients with quality representation that does not come at the expense of other clients on our caseloads or the attorney's own health. We know that the current standards are not workable, and the studies upon which the proposed caseload standards are based demonstrate this. A common proposal from those opposed to progress on public defense caseload standards is to call for the assembly of a local workgroup in lieu of any movement forward. This position overlooks the fact that these proposed standards were arrived at following a robust collaboration between the RAND Corporation, the National Center for State Courts, and the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defense. The standards are rooted in research and a comprehensive analysis of 17 state-level public defense studies and an expert panel of 33 expert criminal defense attorneys from across the country. These studies demonstrated what we as public defenders in Washington already knew—that our clients and our communities suffer when cases take years to resolve because their attorneys do not have adequate time to prepare. Our clients' constitutional rights to a speedy trial are rendered meaningless as they often have no choice but to continue their cases until their attorney can be prepared on their case. Our public defenders are pushed to their limits, and the current system is clearly not sustainable for our clients or for our attorneys. I urge you to adopt the proposed court rules that would codify the WSBA standards, so that we in Washington can truly provide the representation enshrined in *Gideon* so many years ago.

Thank you,
Kari Boyum