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**Subject:** FW: Proposed amendments to Standards of Indigent Defense  
**Date:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 2:32:33 PM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Kari Reardon <Kari@karireardonlaw.com>  
Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2024 2:10 PM  
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
Subject: Proposed amendments to Standards of Indigent Defense

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Honorable Justices,

My name is Kari Reardon, WSBA #26142, and I am a career-long provider of indigent defense services. There are several continuing issues with public defense.

1. Public defense is inadequately funded: this includes lack of funding to pay attorneys salaries and lack of funding to provide support staff (i.e. legal assistants), investigators, expert witnesses, and social workers.

I continually watch people leave indigent defense to work for the AG. They are paid based on their experience and have retirement, health insurance and adequate support staff. Their jobs are not constant stress. The same cannot be said for public defense attorneys, especially those who are part of a public defense office.

2. Many public defense administrators are not fighting for the attorneys. Being beholden to a county government to keep a job does not result in requests for appropriate funding.

I currently work as a contractor for Clark County Public Defense. The County just started a public defense office. For the first time in years an attorney with criminal defense experience is at the helm: the director continually yields to the desires of his supervisor, the deputy county manager. He cannot act independently of what the deputy county manager supports. He does not support pay parity for the contractors. He continually talks about building the public defense office, but fails to recognize that he needs to oversee all of public defense and have a separate individual running the public defense office.

3. The current standards are not mandatory.

4. The proposed standards need to be reviewed as caseloads are reduced. Most importantly including funding for support staff and other resources is important. That contract attorneys must pay for Legal Research, computers, access to electronic court files, photocopying and redacting the discovery that we must provide, health insurance and support staff is not feasible.

5. The work is exhausting. We cannot continue to lose attorneys and expect that the accused and indigent will be provided a constitutional defense.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kari Reardon  
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