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**Subject:** FW: Writing in Support of the Public Defense Caseload Standards  
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**From:** Kimberly Sloan <[ksloan@snocopda.org](mailto:ksloan@snocopda.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 11:29 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <[SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV](mailto:SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV)>  
**Subject:** Writing in Support of the Public Defense Caseload Standards

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Honorable Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court  
Temple of Justice  
Email: [supreme@courts.wa.gov](mailto:supreme@courts.wa.gov).

Dear Honorable Justices,

Subject: Support for the 2023 National Public Defender Workload Standards

I have been a Public Defender since November of 2007 and have practiced in 3 jurisdictions located in two states. I presently work as a Public Defender in Snohomish County and am writing in support of the Public Defender Workload Standards.

Time is a Public Defender's most valuable resource. Public defense works best when you have time to get to know your client, time to develop a relationship of trust, time to properly research issues, and time to properly prepare. Triage is what Public Defenders have time for. Time is a Public Defender's most limited resource.

Since inception, criminal defense has grown more complicated and time-consuming. Forensic evidence, DNA, surveillance cameras, body worn cameras, and other law enforcement technology, have added more work, discovery and training requirements. More time is needed to work cases. Social media, cell phones, and other technological advances have added avenues of potentially exculpatory evidence that require examination and investigation. AI will no doubt add further complexities. Each individual case requires more time than it has ever before.

Public Defender caseloads require regularly working nights and weekends. Public Defenders are sometimes disparaged by their clients, the judiciary they appear in front of, opposing counsel, and sometimes their own offices. Burnout, depression, trauma, and exhaustion are commonplace in this profession.

If the government charges people with a crime, the government must also ensure constitutionally sufficient representation to every single person accused. The government relies upon underpaid public defenders working nights and weekends, taking time away from family and friends, and compromising their mental and physical health, to provide an adequate defense. If the government cannot afford their burden, the government might spend more time considering who they charge and for what reason.

The Supreme Court and the State have a responsibility to ensure every accused person receives an adequate and effective defense. Those that have not been Public Defenders have no idea what it is like to carry the weight of this job. Those that worry about the cost of the new standards are comfortable relying on Public Defenders working nights and weekends and “turn and burn” culture. Some opposing the new caseload standards speculate about unrealistic chaos and vigilante justice. This dooms day nonsense should be ignored. The Court should rely on the data that has been compiled and studied for well over a decade and adopt standards that are in line with the requirements of our constitution.

Kind Regards,  
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