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**Subject:** FW: Comment re: Proposed Indigent Defense Standards  
**Date:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 2:35:17 PM

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**From:** Laura Schulman <[lschulman@kitsap.gov](mailto:lschulman@kitsap.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 2:33 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <[SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV](mailto:SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV)>  
**Subject:** Comment re: Proposed Indigent Defense Standards

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I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed changes to the indigent defense standards, and to strongly encourage the Court to consider modifying the proposed standards to make them more manageable for smaller and more rural jurisdictions.

I am a supervising attorney in the Kitsap County Office of Public Defense, where I have been employed since 2015. Prior to that, I worked for a private firm with a public defense contract in Kitsap County. During my tenure at Kitsap OPD, our office has grown exponentially – something I believe has been a great benefit to our clients, and our community in general. That being said, these new standards, once fully in effect in only 3 short years, would require us to hire someone in the realm of 30-40 more attorneys to stay in compliance. And this is only attorneys – this does not include support staff, investigators, and social workers. While our county commissioners have been generous and supportive of our growth so far, they would **not** have the funds to continue to support us at that level of growth. This could mean the death of our office.

Beyond the costs, the reduction in caseload to the degree proposed is ludicrous – as a supervisor, I would hardly be able to have any cases at the level I should be able to contribute to my office. I want to be able to have a reasonable amount of cases in order to keep my trial skills honed. I want to be able to help as many clients as I can, to the best of my abilities. To be perfectly frank – I don't need the WSBA to tell me how many cases I can handle effectively. I'm a professional, and I am experienced, and I work for an office that takes this into account. I just ask that the WSBA and the Supreme Court do the same.

I am 100% in favor of a caseload reduction, but not to the degree proposed, and not in the timeline proposed. As proposed, this will bankrupt counties and break the system, something Larry Jefferson came to our county and directly told us was his goal. I don't want to break the system – I just want to make it better and help my clients. These new standards will stifle those goals. Please reconsider and remember that most counties in this state are not King or Snohomish Counties.

Laura Schulman  
WSBA #45924

\*These comments are my own opinion and do not necessarily reflect those of Kitsap County or the

Office of Public Defense”