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Subject: FW: WSBA criminal caseload standards for public defenders
Date: Monday, September 30, 2024 3:47:27 PM

From: Valdovinos, Lessy <Lessy.Valdovinos@kingcounty.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 30, 2024 3:45 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: WSBA criminal caseload standards for public defenders

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Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court,

I am writing in support of the proposed court rule amendments to codify the WSBA's recently passed criminal caseload standards for public defenders in Washington State. I started my career in public defense as a legal assistant, then as a paralegal, and now as a paralegal supervisor for one of the public defense divisions. For the past eight years, my passion and purpose have been to provide compassionate administrative support to indigent clients as well as to assist the hardworking attorneys who have dedicated their careers to representing the accused in this harsh legal system.

I love what I do and I'm proud to work alongside public defenders every day. However, public defenders desperately need more support. The existing standards are antiquated and do not take into account the circumstances that exist today or the work that public defenders are required to do in order to effectively represent clients. It is imperative that the proposed caseload standards for public defenders be implemented in order to ensure superior representation, uphold due process, enhance public trust in the judicial system, and improve outcomes.

I urge you to adopt the proposed court rules that would codify the WSBA's caseload standards for public defenders so the right enshrined in Gideon entitles everyone of our clients to more than just a warm body with a bar card.

Lessy Valdovinos

King County Department of Public Defense