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To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Comment on proposed rule changes
Date: Thursday, October 31, 2024 4:57:15 PM

From: Lindsay Zerfas <lbzerfas@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2024 4:56 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Comment on proposed rule changes

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing today to express my support for revising and reducing the current public defender caseload standards in Washington State.

I am an active civil rights attorney in Washington and a former public defender. These issues are near and dear to my heart, as well as critical to the civil rights of all individuals in Washington State.

Anyone charged with a crime is innocent unless and until the State of Washington proves them guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Innocent and entitled to intelligent, zealous, and informed representation. Speaking from experience, it is excruciating to try and provide that level of representation — a level required by the Constitution and supported by the American Bar Association, the Washington State Bar Association, and the standards for indigent defense — under the current caseload standards.

Public defenders and their offices are given far fewer resources than the entities prosecuting their clients. This means that a daily decision must be made between taking care of your own self and making sure that your clients are not wrongfully incarcerated.

Being a public defender was my dream, and a role I was honored to have served in. But ultimately, the job's toll on my personal life forced the difficult decision for me to leave the field. Had the standards been different, I would still be doing that work.

Defense is not optional, and all of us are entitled to adequate defense. But under the current standards, that defense is lacking in many instances. I urge you to reduce the caseload standards so all citizens of Washington are able to receive the representation our constitution demands.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Zerfas

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