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Subject: FW: Comment on Proposed Public Defense Standards
Date: Friday, August 23, 2024 4:16:17 PM

From: Liz Douglass <LDouglass@vandef.org>
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2024 4:13 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Comment on Proposed Public Defense Standards

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Dear Washington Supreme Court,

My name is Elizabeth Douglass. I am a misdemeanor public defense attorney in Clark County, Washington. I was previously a public defense attorney in Benton County, Washington, and briefly worked as a private attorney before coming to Clark County. I am writing to express my support for the proposed public defense standards. As misdemeanor public defenders at the 400-cases-per-year standard, our workloads are crushing. This is especially true for attorneys who want to provide zealous representation to each client. Reducing caseloads, especially for misdemeanors like DUIs and Assault DVs, ensures clients get more time from their attorneys and gives attorneys the time with each case to issue spot, investigate, and negotiate.

As a public defense attorney in Benton County I knew that if I had more time with each client, I could provide better representation. Only when I was a private attorney did I fully grasp the dramatic difference in representation that private and public defense clients receive. Each client deserves to have an attorney comb through their case, submit any relevant public record requests, attend interviews with witnesses, and do caselaw research. This is impossible at the 400 misdemeanor/year level.

I wholeheartedly support the proposed changes.

Sincerely,
Liz Douglass
Attorney, Vancouver Defenders, P.S.
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