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Subject: FW: Comment in support of adopting caseload standards
Date: Thursday, October 31, 2024 2:30:48 PM

From: Madeleine O'Neill <madeleine.c.oneill@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2024 2:00 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Comment in support of adopting caseload standards

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Good afternoon,

I am an attorney with the King County Department of Public Defense, and I write to urge the Court to codify the proposed caseload standards. As a Washington public defender, I know from first-hand experience that the most vulnerable members of our community are not receiving their Sixth Amendment right to counsel due to the vast overburdening of the criminal legal system that results in crushing public defense caseloads. This is a crisis throughout the state, and knowing how unsustainable the caseloads are even in King County is truly alarming for people in communities that have fewer resources. I deeply hope I can keep doing this work for the rest of my career, but I know there could come a point where I am no longer able to ethically continue because I know I cannot provide anything near effective assistance of counsel to all my clients. I hope to never reach that point. By codifying these caseload standards, the Court will make the Sixth Amendment right to counsel a reality for everyone in this state, not just those who can afford to pay for it. Please adopt these standards and uphold the Constitution for all.

Thank you,

Madeleine O'Neill