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Subject: FW: Urgent Need to Lower Public Defender Caseloads in Washington State
Date: Tuesday, October 22, 2024 8:08:55 AM

From: Marah Alindogan <marah.alindogan@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 21, 2024 5:24 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Urgent Need to Lower Public Defender Caseloads in Washington State

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Dear Honorable Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court,

I am writing to express my concern over the excessive caseloads faced by public defenders across Washington State, specifically in Snohomish County, where my best friend of 10+ years serves as a public defender. These overwhelming caseloads significantly impede their ability to provide the quality defense that our Constitution guarantees for all defendants.

As you are aware, the American Bar Association recommends that public defenders handle no more than 150 felony cases or 400 misdemeanor cases annually. Yet, many defenders in Washington, including my friend, regularly exceed these numbers. This overburden not only leads to burnout and high turnover but compromises the quality of legal representation provided to indigent defendants—those most vulnerable in our society.

Without adequate time and resources, public defenders cannot meet the basic standard of defense, let alone the complex needs of each individual case. This situation disproportionately impacts marginalized communities and undermines the principle of justice for all.

I urge the Court to consider measures that would help reduce caseloads for public defenders, whether through enforcing stricter caseload limits, increasing funding for public defense offices, or exploring alternative solutions to alleviate this burden.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical issue. Ensuring that our public defense system operates effectively is essential to preserving the integrity of our justice system.

Sincerely,
Marah Alindogan