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**Subject:** FW: Support for Reduced Public Defender Case Standards  
**Date:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 4:40:43 PM

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**From:** Matt Emmick <mattemmick206@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 4:40 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** Support for Reduced Public Defender Case Standards

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Dear Justices,

I write in support of the reduced case standards for public defense attorneys. By way of background, I recently joined the King County Department of Public Defense, The Defender Association, in July of 2024. I was born and raised in Seattle, but left to attend Howard University School of Law in 2010. In my ten years of practice in Maryland and DC, I've been fortunate to work in numerous practice areas including: clerking for the first Muslim-American judge appointed to the Circuit Court bench in Maryland, working in private practice, and as an Assistant Attorney General, in both civil and criminal capacities, with the DC Office of Attorney General. However, I take the most pride in my four years of service as an Assistant Public Defender with the Maryland Office of the Public Defender.

After careful consideration, I elected to return "home" to Washington to continue serving our most downtrodden community members as a Public Defense Attorney in King County. Even in my short time here, I can say that the caseloads, particularly felony caseloads, are crushing and unmanageable. This leads to excessive turnover due to burnout. Our State loses some of the best and brightest attorneys, some of the most tenacious advocates for justice, due to these caseloads. As someone who has worked on both sides of the "aisle," I can say that justice is not being done under the current caseload status quo.

While some may claim that reduced caseloads will lead to vigilantism because prosecutors are forced to dismiss or not charge more cases, this is nothing more than a boogeyman, a proverbial red herring. Reduced caseloads, in line with the ABA, will make our state a more attractive place to practice law and will lead to less burnout, better hiring, and better retention, not just in public defense offices, but across the legal profession.

In closing, I urge this Honorable Court to adopt the proposed reduced caseloads standards so that we can safeguard the bedrock constitutional rights for our most marginalized community members and to advance the legal profession in our great state.

Respectfully,  
Matthew F. Emmick

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