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Subject: FW: Public Defense Standards
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From: Matthew Ibershof <mibershof@snocopda.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2024 4:58 PM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Public Defense Standards

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Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court,

I am writing in support of the proposed public defense caseload standards. As a law office assistant for one and a half years and former member of court staff for two years I have seen firsthand the immense pressure a criminal accusation can have on someone.

When I answer the phone, daily I hear pleas from our clients to have their attorney talk with them, sometimes for just five minutes. Friday's, I try to reassure clients that their attorney will get back to them before court Monday. Clients will walk miles to our office, just on the off chance their attorney is available to speak, in custody clients will call multiple times a day, hoping for any update on their case.

These caseloads are unsustainable, and people incarcerated pretrial suffer as their cases are continued to allow attorney's more time to interview witnesses, draft motions, and review voluminous discovery - including hours of body cam footage. Our office recently had to pay for even more storage this year, as we used up what would normally be a year's worth of server space in early October.

Opponents of these standards argue that the cost of employing so many more public defenders would bankrupt cities and in turn break down the legal system. The system is currently broken, these case load standards are one step of many that will improve it. The supreme court in Gideon did not predicate your right to an attorney on whether the local jurisdiction could afford it, while these concerns are valid, this court should prioritize setting caseloads that allow attorneys to meet their baseline ethical obligations. The legislature can work on approving funding, perhaps investing more in therapeutic alternatives to prosecution and community courts.

I want to go to law school and be a public defender, but I also want a job that allows me a work life balance to see family and exercise. I hope that this court and the state makes

public defense a priority in the future. Please adopt these case load standards.

Thank you for your time,

Matthew Ibershof (he/him)

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