

**From:** [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)  
**To:** [Martinez, Jacquelyn](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Email in Support of Adopting Proposed Public Defender Caseload Standards  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 24, 2024 10:33:01 AM

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**From:** Mills, Max <maxmills@kingcounty.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 24, 2024 9:49 AM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** Email in Support of Adopting Proposed Public Defender Caseload Standards

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Dear Justices,

I write to you all to in support of adopting the proposed amendment to the court rules regarding Standards of Indigent Defense, which will reduce the caseloads for public defenders. I am a public defender in King County and have had the privilege of serving the public in this capacity for almost two years.

I went to law school for one purpose: to become a public defender. I wanted to use my law degree to help people, to affirm their humanity in an inhumane system, and to push back against overreaching and violent state actors. Serving as a public defender allows me to do this.

Unfortunately, due to tremendously high caseloads that I experience, I am unable to fulfill this purpose. Rather than giving every client the attention they are constitutionally entitled to, I am forced to triage my cases, focusing on extinguishing fires that surround me. Though I am singed by these fires, it is my clients who are most burned. Adopting the proposed caseload standards will allow public defenders to focus more effectively on fighting for their clients, rather than fighting fires.

Adopting the proposed caseload standards will also protect against burnout. I have seen too many of my colleagues and friends--people like me who were called to this profession--collapse under the weight of high and demanding caseloads. This burnout causes passionate, driven, smart, and dedicated people to leave, and it is difficult to replace them. And while it impacts all public defenders when a colleague leaves, the people who are most impacted by this are the clients, people who are often the most marginalized folks in society.

The proposed caseload standards are supported by objective, empirical research. They are not plucked out of thin air. They are what is necessary to prevent a public defense--and by extension

public safety--crisis in Washington.

Please adopt the proposed standards. Thank you.

Best,

Max Mills

He/Him/His

Staff Attorney; TDA Division

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