

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: WSBA Recommended Revised Standards for Indigent Defense and Caseload Limits
Date: Monday, April 15, 2024 3:55:29 PM
Attachments: [Indigent Defense - City of Aberdeen.pdf](#)

From: Ruth Clemens <rclemens@aberdeenwa.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2024 12:29 PM
To: steven.gonzalez@courts.wa.gov
Cc: Yu, Justice Mary <Mary.Yu@courts.wa.gov>; OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>; Douglas Orr <dorr@aberdeenwa.gov>
Subject: WSBA Recommended Revised Standards for Indigent Defense and Caseload Limits

External Email Warning! This email has originated from outside of the Washington State Courts Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, are expecting the email, and know the content is safe. If a link sends you to a website where you are asked to validate using your Account and Password, **DO NOT DO SO!** Instead, report the incident.

Good afternoon Chief Justice Gonzalez and all Justices of the Washington Supreme Court,

I am sending this email on behalf of Mayor Douglas Orr from the City of Aberdeen.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Ruth Clemens
City Administrator
City of Aberdeen
(360) 537-3233



April 15, 2024

Chief Justice González
Washington State Supreme Court
PO Box 40929
Olympia, WA 98504-0929

Subject: WSBA Recommended Revised Standards for Indigent Defense and Caseload Limits

Dear Chief Justice González:

I am the Mayor of the City of Aberdeen. I write to echo and emphasize the concerns expressed in the Association of Washington Cities' ("AWC") March 26, 2024, Memorandum to the Washington State Supreme Court Justices regarding the above-referenced matter.

The City's general fund, from which public defense funds are paid, simply is not robust enough to absorb the significant financial burden should the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governor's recommended changes to the Washington Standards for Indigent Defense be adopted. As AWC indicated in its Memo, City funding sources are limited, both statutorily and constitutionally. Further, during a period of time in which our nation's economy is suffering from high inflation costs and a sluggish economy, many of the City's residents simply do not have the means to pay any tax increases the City could legally impose.

To timely meet the proposed caseload standards recommended by the WSBA Board of Governors also constitutes a significant challenge to Aberdeen due to the current dearth of qualified public defenders available for hire. It is highly unlikely Aberdeen could retain three times the number of public defenders for which Aberdeen currently contracts.

While the City appreciates the WSBA Board of Governors' concerns related to the current state of Washington Standards for Indigent Defense, adoption of their recommendations, especially under the currently proposed timeline, will cause an undue burden and hardship on the City and its residents. I respectfully request that the Board of Governors' proposed changes be denied, or at a minimum delayed until funding and recruiting considerations can be addressed in such a manner that does not unfairly impact municipalities such as Aberdeen.



Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Orr', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Douglas Orr, Mayor
City of Aberdeen

Cc: Associate Chief Justice Yu
Honorable Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court