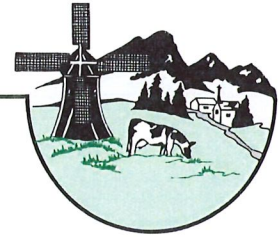


CITY OF LYNDEN

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Scott Korthuis, Mayor



Washington State Supreme Court
PO Box 40929
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Comments on Proposed Changes to the Standards for Indigent Defense

Dear Honorable Justices,

On behalf of the City of Lynden, I am writing to express concerns regarding the proposed revised standards for indigent defense and caseload limits. The proposed revisions will not solve current issues, but rather result in new and greater challenges.

In 2023, 21% of the city's cases fell under indigent status. The city contracts with the North County Public Defenders for services. The proposed revisions will require a contract cost increase to handle the same caseload. This will require even greater investment than our existing \$60,000 per year.

This situation could lead to potential budget cuts to therapeutic courts, community programs, and essential services. It could also lead to budget reallocations, which could affect community programs, including police services, recreation programs, and community centers that have been proven to reduce juvenile crime rates.

Increased costs are a significant concern, with estimates reaching \$180,000 annually for Lynden if proposed recommendations are approved. The proposed changes will cause the city to consider closing our municipal court due to affordability.

The Lynden Municipal Court primarily handles misdemeanor cases related to driving while suspended, driving under the influence, driving while intoxicated, traffic, assault, domestic violence and shoplifting. The proposed revisions will require cities like Lynden to take an already strained budget and decide which laws it will not enforce to reduce costs. This will not increase public safety; rather, it will erode public safety for other community members.

We recommend conducting a Washington-specific study before adopting national standards. Additionally, a gradual implementation of changes for misdemeanors should be considered to build the necessary workforce and secure funding. Legislative support for student loan forgiveness, internships, and other programs would help increase the public defense workforce. We also support feasible reforms, such as training requirements for misdemeanor public defenders and consider a statewide network of social workers.

CITY OF LYNDEN

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Scott Korthuis, Mayor



The City of Lynden requests the Supreme Court to reject amendments until feasible alternatives are developed.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Korthuis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" and last name "Korthuis" clearly legible.

Scott Korthuis
Mayor

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Comment on Proposed Changes to the Standards for Indigent Defense- Mayor Scott Korthuis, City of Lynden, WA
Date: Friday, October 18, 2024 9:31:25 AM
Attachments: [City-Lynden-Mayor-Korthuis-20241018.pdf](#)

From: Pam Brown <BrownPa@LYNDENWA.ORG>
Sent: Friday, October 18, 2024 9:30 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Comment on Proposed Changes to the Standards for Indigent Defense- Mayor Scott Korthuis, City of Lynden, WA

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Good Morning.
Please see attached correspondence regarding the *Proposed Changes to the Standards for Indigent Defense*.

Thank you.

Pamela (Pam) D. Brown, MMC | City Clerk
City of Lynden
Phone: 360-255-7085
300 4th Street | Lynden, WA 98264
Email: brownpa@lyndenwa.org

All incoming and outgoing messages are subject to public disclosure.