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**To:** [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)  
**Subject:** FW: I support the Proposed Standards for Indigent Defense  
**Date:** Thursday, September 26, 2024 10:31:01 AM

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**From:** Harvey, Shannon <Shannon.Harvey@kingcounty.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 26, 2024 10:21 AM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** I support the Proposed Standards for Indigent Defense

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Dear Washington Supreme Court,

I am writing to ask you to please support reduced caseload standards. I am an investigator in King County. I love my job and I love giving my clients everything I can; however, due to current caseloads it is nearly impossible for me to even do the bare minimum asked of me.

We desperately need more support. Our entire office has been on the brink of collapse, with no relief in sight. Every time an attorney burns out and leaves my office, the volume of work increases even more, and our clients suffer. I have worked here through numerous transitions and changes over the years, but I have never seen such low morale as I have in the last 3-5 years. I no longer am shocked when I receive news that yet another one of our most experienced career attorneys is leaving. I now just assume that the working relationships I build with new attorneys will be temporary. These losses of qualified and experienced attorneys have been at a huge cost to our clients who deserve quality representation.

My workload is complex and comprised exclusively of serious felony cases, most of which are class A. I'm consistently juggling 3-5 homicides at once with a huge percentage of my remaining caseload being serious sex crimes. These cases require tremendous man hours, hours that I am limited to at 40 a week. It is not fair for our clients' cases to be worked via the principles of triage, which is our only option. I constantly reassure myself that it is not humanly possible to get done all of the work I need to do. My coworkers and I are put in an impossible situation where we have to constantly juggle emergent demands while the stakes are so high, and when peoples' liberty and lives are on the line. We are not given the resources to do our jobs effectively, and while our clients suffer the most, we are also harmed in this process. We agonize over tasks not completed, and the physical limits of our bodies and being a human.

The poor representation that many clients receive is a hidden cost that the public never sees, and politicians feel no impetus to fix it. Unlike most legal practice areas, public defense requires stringent requirements to ensure that the government doesn't go back on Gideon's

Promise. It is part of your important role in our state to ensure that our residents receive their 6th Amendment rights.

Again, I love my job, I have been here over 15 years, and ideally I would continue until retirement. I have a deep commitment to my clients and my coworkers, but this is not sustainable and I'm worried about how much longer I can last in this position. Please, we cannot wait for years of discussion and slow movement, we need help now. Please accept the proposed rules.

Thank you for listening,

Shannon Harvey

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**Shannon Harvey** (she/her)

**Investigator**

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