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Subject: FW: In SUPPORT of adopting WSBA Criminal Caseload Standards
Date: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 10:41:47 AM

From: Kelley, Shannon <shakelley@kingcounty.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 10:39 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: In SUPPORT of adopting WSBA Criminal Caseload Standards

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Hello,

I am writing **in support of adopting the proposed court rule to codify WSBA's Criminal Caseload Standards for Public Defenders.**

As a public defense social worker, my number one priority is making sure my clients are heard. Sometimes that means writing mitigation to present to the prosecutors and the court. Sometimes the best I can do is lend my own listening ear. As public defense caseload standards are right now, **my clients are not receiving their constitutionally guaranteed right to be heard as they are accused of a crime.**

Why is it so difficult to keep attorneys and social workers, investigators and paralegals in this work? Because we cannot sustainably do our jobs as it stands today. While I have made the choice to do this work and will stick by it even in its deplorable conditions, my clients, *my community* did not decide to be charged with a crime, to be poor or disenfranchised. It is this body's job to ensure that Washingtonian's are given fair and equal rights under the law. Currently that is not happening.

Implementing new caseload standards is just one small way that Washingtonians can get closer to having their constitutional rights applied fairly to them, no matter their socioeconomic status, racial or gender background. New caseload standards will allow me to be fully present for each client, just as they deserve. Failing to pass this court rule will set public defense back statewide. Public defenders are barely holding on. We cannot go on much longer without real, sustainable change.

Thank you,

Shannon Kelley, MSW, LICSW (She/Her)
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