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To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Public Defender caseloads
Date: Monday, October 7, 2024 8:42:12 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Steven Bradlow <sbradlow@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 5, 2024 10:49 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Public Defender caseloads

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To: Washington Supreme Court Justices

I am writing to urge you to amend the court rule governing caseloads for public defenders and to adopt the newly passed and greatly improved Washington State Bar Association standards.

A very dedicated public defender who I know well has told me that under the current system public defenders get about 12 hours per felony case. I have observed the extraordinary lengths to which this public defender routinely goes in order to protect the rights of her clients and to ensure they get the legal representation they deserve. Not only does it make a mockery of these efforts to expect them to be accomplished in such a short time, but the result is surely a trampling of the clients' constitutionally protect rights.

I urge you to consider also the impact of the current system on the public defenders themselves. The public defender I know cares deeply about her clients and is deeply committed to her role in the legal system. Being unable to properly do her job because of the grossly inadequate conditions of the present system has pushed her to the limits of sustainable stress levels.

Apart from the personal toll on her and others like her and their families, forcing public defenders to operate in this way must surely further erode the effectiveness of the vital service they provide. Reducing caseloads will allow them to better protect constitutional rights, connect clients to mental health and addiction programs, and reduce future criminal justice contacts.

By adopting the new Washington State Bar Association standards the Court has the opportunity to bring our justice system one step closer into proper alignment with the promises of our Constitution.

Sincerely,
Steven Bradlow