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**Subject:** FW: Codifying WSBA Criminal Caseload Standards  
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**From:** Sobel, Susan (DPD) <Susan.Sobel@kingcounty.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 26, 2024 11:46 AM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Subject:** Codifying WSBA Criminal Caseload Standards

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Hi there,

I am a class a qualified public defender with King County writing in support of the supreme court codifying the case load standards.

I started teaching creative writing in prisons and juvies when I was in college. After graduating I worked in gang violence reduction, reentry services, and went to law school with the intent of becoming a public defender. I have been in my role at DPD since 2017 and have the privilege and honor to practice public defense in the community that raised me. My singular goal in becoming a lawyer was to advocate in the criminal legal system for the rights of the accused. This is a job I have loved and given myself wholeheartedly to – but is not one I can sustain if our case loads don't improve. I will leave if these standards are not adopted and that is a sentiment widely shared without our office.

Our unit is currently in crisis with all of the felony high level/class A qualified attorneys currently at a breaking point. People are either quitting to go to private practice or requesting out of the unit to get case load relief. This leaves me as the only class A/felony high level qualified attorney left to inherit their caseloads as well as accept all the incoming high level cases.

My case load as it stands consists in the most part of the below:

- 11 serious sex offense cases. This means Rape 1's, Rape 2s, ROC 1's, Child Mol 1, Indecent Liberties etc.
- 13 serious violent felonies including 5 murders. The other serious violent felonies include Kidnapping 1, Assault 1's, and third strike cases
- 7 Class A violent cases (e.g. Robbery 1, Assault 2, Drive by Shootings)
- 12 class b nonviolent crimes

-One single class C felony case

This is an untenable situation made only worse by the looming inheritance of my coworkers cases. I cannot give clients the constitutionally effective representation they deserve under the current standards. I cannot remain a healthy happy person with this case load. People don't often enough talk about the physical and emotional health damages of this amount of stress. I want to do this job. I want to be able to do this job well. I cannot unless these new case load standards are adopted. I will not be a career public defender without change.

I also find it deflating and offensive to sit through these hearings, knowing the work we all do tirelessly each day and how we are all feeling in our office, and listen to current judges and stakeholders advocate against our literal well-being and our clients right to constitutionally effective representation. Its repugnant for us to hear people, not doing our work and not struggling under the weight of our caseloads, speak on it in opposition. The message it will send for our supreme court to not adopt these will be devastating.

Thanks,

**Susy Sobel**

Attorney

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