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Subject: FW: New Indigent Defense Standards Proposal
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From: Timothy Hall <timothyjameshall@hotmail.com>
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To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: New Indigent Defense Standards Proposal

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Dear Justices,

I have been in public defense for almost 20 years and during that time I witnessed the changes that occurred in 2012-2015 when the current standards were adopted. Virtually all of the same arguments made now were also made then. Seeing changes on the horizon, in 2007 the Yakima Municipal Court went from one public defender handling over 3000 cases a year (no that is not a misprint) to 5 defenders splitting up the roughly 3400 cases. We would now view one attorney handling over 3000 cases a year as almost criminal- per se ineffective assistance for sure. I am friends with the former paralegal in that firm and she told me that they would double book clients every 15 minutes. When the 2015 changes came around, the number of defenders expanded to 9 ½ defenders at the city of Yakima Municipal Court. Now, almost a decade later, that number would increase again. All through 2012 and 2015 the chorus rang out " it will bankrupt cities!" "You won't be able to find attorney!" And yet, neither occurred. In fact, there is no clamoring to go back to the pre 2015 caseload changes- and why is that? Because we all except that it was the right thing to do.

In the end, poor defendants have always gotten the short end of the stick going back centuries and, in the end, I think the real question here is: are the new proposed caseload standards just arbitrary numbers or are they based on a legitimate attempt to expand access to justice and create a more level playing for disadvantaged persons? Only you can answer that question, but I doubt any impoverished defendant would complain about having access to an attorney that isn't overburdened by their caseloads.

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