



Public Defense Caseloads

6/24/25



Caseload Standards

- Felony – 47 case credits
- Misdemeanor – 120 case credits
- Civil Commitment – 250 case credits

Phasing

- Phasing permitted
- 10% progress per year from current standards
- Full compliance by 2036

Case Count/Weighting

- The Court **did not** adopt mandatory case count/weighting standards
- County departments **must adopt** policies that comply with existing rules
- If no policies are adopted, actual case counts will be used.

Case Weighting/Credits – “Assigns higher and lower values or weighted case credits to assigned cases based on the amount of time that is typically required to provide effective representation.” -

WSBA

Analysis

- Effectively negates the increase from \$10.3m to \$27.2m in the state budget
- Roughly **triples** the direct cost
- Indirect costs will be more
- The order is distinct from our ongoing litigation related to public defense

Staff Recommendation

- WSAC should implement a more aggressive communications push to engage the public.
- Ask the Governor and Legislative leadership to call a special session to address immediate impacts.

Staff Recommendation

- Public legal workforce development must be a top priority for the Legislature
- Consider support for a State operated public defense department similar to Idaho and Oregon