

WASHINGTON DEFENDER ASSOCIATION
WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

April 13, 2023

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Re: Please sign 2SSB 5046: Postconviction Access to Counsel

Dear Governor Inslee,

We are writing on behalf of the Washington Defender Association and the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers urging you to sign 2SSB 5046: Postconviction Access to Counsel.

Incarcerated individuals who seek a post-conviction remedy through a personal restraint petition (PRP) are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community who seek judicial review of issues impacting their right to liberty. The bill attaches the right to counsel for a PRP petitioner at an earlier stage and promotes efficiency, accountability, and economic equality.

Although we would have preferred more robust funding, we endorse the amended bill that reduces the fiscal impact to the state and prioritizes counsel for the most disadvantaged clients. We would note that the results of this representation can lead to cost savings to the state if unjust sentences are overturned. More importantly, it will provide an addition avenue to help redress past unfairness in the criminal legal system processes that often have affected noncitizens, young people, and BIPOC communities.

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please contact Christie Hedman at hedman@defensenet.org or 206-623-4321.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Christie Hedman
Executive Director, WDA



Amy Hirota
Executive Director, WACDL

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WDA is a non-profit organization created in 1983 to promote, assist, and encourage public defense systems which ensure that all accused persons in every court receive effective assistance of counsel

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WACDL is a non-profit organization working to improve the quality & administration of justice by protecting & insuring by rule of law those individual rights guaranteed by the Washington and Federal Constitutions