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**Carrie Janto - Comment on In re the Petition to Amend SCR 81.02**

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To the honorable Court –

I am an attorney with 17 years of experience as a lawyer. I consider myself a generalist, as I try to help people in whatever trouble they find themselves in, as well as advising businesses as a consultant.

My father was a criminal defense attorney. While I am fascinated by criminal work and would be very interested in helping in a court-appointed setting, I cannot in good faith accept any commission to defend as it is simply not feasible economically in my practice.

To give you an idea, farmers will pay me \$4,000 flat fees to help them with business plans, and up to \$25,000 for grant writing.

Businesses, even start ups, will pay me \$150 an hour to help them create or improve their businesses.

In my private legal practice, I am billed out at \$300 per hour.

When I did contingency work, my aggregated hourly rate was in excess of \$450 per hour.

These are all fairly standard rates in the business and legal world. I do not understand why one of the most critical interfaces between our citizens and our laws would try to find professional assistance at a rate that is below \$100 per hour or on a flat fee retainer. To give you an idea of the absurdity of the rates I'm seeing proposed for publicly appointed criminal defense work, when I was a paralegal in Hawaii 25 years ago doing high-volume, low risk workers' compensation work, I was billed out at \$75 per hour.

There has been much discussion over the last decade about the deteriorating respect for lawyers in our society, as well as the increasing pressure on our indigent citizens. Part of that problem, no doubt, comes from the lack of support of this most basic of legal representation in the criminal setting. If we are going to honor the Constitution and our ethical standards, we must raise the rates offered in appointed-criminal defense matters to a reasonable rate. In my professional, business-analyst opinion, I believe anything below \$100 per hour to be unreasonable.

Thank you for your focus on this matter.

Bartlett

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