

To the Editor:

This article highlighted the reality that public defenders cannot provide effective representation when they are saddled with grossly excessive caseloads. No lawyer can be effective without adequate time and resources; and that time and those resources cost money.

Many people believe the problem is intractable. It is not.

One state has enacted bold laws and provided significant funding to attack the crisis of excessive public defense caseloads. That state is New York. In December 2016, as part of a lawsuit settlement, the state Office of Indigent Legal Services produced Caseload Standards that dramatically reduced the number of cases that public defense attorneys may be assigned in five counties. In 2017, those Standards were extended statewide at state expense, under a five year plan for full compliance by 2023 at an estimated annual cost of \$250 million.

Robust progress backed by full state funding is underway. In New York, excessive public defense caseloads will be eliminated, and defendants will receive the effective representation guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment.