


Linn County Circuit Court
PO Box 1749
Albany, Or 97321

MEMORANDUM

To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety,
2015 Legislature

From: Hon. Daniel R. Murphy, Presiding Judge, Linn County Circuit Court 

Date: February 26, 2015

Re: Office of Public Defense Services Parent Child Representation Program

Co-Chair Shields, Co-Chair Williamson, and Members of the Committee,

I am the Presiding Circuit Court Judge in Linn County and have served as a circuit court judge in Linn County since 1994. The comments contained within this document are my own; I am not providing testimony as a representative of or on behalf of the Oregon Judicial Department.

The purpose of this testimony is to provide information on the implementation of the Parent Child Representation Program (PCRP) which began in Linn County in August 2014. My understanding of this program is that it limits the caseload for juvenile public defense attorneys, requires the attorneys to attend all court hearings including shelter hearings, and encourages system improvement through multidisciplinary training and partner collaboration.

Prior to the implementation of the PCRP, defense attorneys were rarely present at shelter hearings and mothers and fathers, when present, typically attended the hearings without legal representation. However, the PCRP required attorneys to be present to advocate for parents and children at the initial removal hearing and attorneys began to appear at shelter hearings in August 2014. I was unsure if attorney representation at the shelter hearing would lead to delays which could negatively impact parents and children. In addition, meaningful representation for parents and children at shelter hearings was logistically challenging because attorneys needed to be identified and contacted, receive discovery, and talk with the clients, if they were present, before the hearing began.

A number of different organizations within the county worked together to address the logistical challenges presented by attorney representation at shelter hearings. Current practice is that attorneys are present at all shelter hearings and regularly provide representation on behalf of their assigned parent and child clients. As a result of attorney participation, my observation is that shelter hearings in Linn County have become over-all more effective and easier for parents to understand.