

Keith Meisenheimer
Mediator and Reference Judge

*16710 Glenwood Ct.
Lake Oswego, Or 97034
k.meisenheimer@comcast.net*

Re: Rate increase for Behavioral Rehabilitation Services in OYA Budget

Dear Joint Ways and Means Public Safety Committee Members,

I write in support of the rate increase for Behavioral Rehabilitation Services in the OYA budget. I am a retired Circuit Court Judge for Multnomah County. Prior to serving as a circuit court judge from 1999 - 2011, I was a deputy district attorney in Multnomah County for 23 years specializing in crimes against children and major crimes of violence.

Early in my career in the district attorney's office, I became convinced that when it comes to child abuse and crimes of violence, an ounce of prevention is worth more than ten pounds of cure. No matter how well the justice system responds, the victim of child abuse or violent crime will forever carry some damage from the offense. We can never make them whole. And appropriate response to crime and child abuse is expensive. From police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, court houses, probation, parole, and corrections officers and facilities to DHS caseworkers, foster care, and residential treatment programs, appropriate response to these maladies is very, very expensive.

But is prevention possible? I am convinced that over the past few decades emphasis on research and evidence based programming has allowed us to identify highly effective approaches to intervention and treatment of youth who by reason of their experiences, circumstances, and/or behavior are high risk of committing child abuse or engaging in criminal conduct. These approaches have been incorporated in the programs supported by BRS services in the OYA budget.

The critical question which confronts us is whether we have the wisdom to invest scarce resources in these effective prevention approaches. I cannot urge you strongly enough to fund the rate increase for BRS services in the OYA budget. It is essential.

*Keith Meisenheimer
Mediator and Reference Judge
2/16/17*