



April 5, 2017

Co-Chair Jackie Winters
Co-Chair Duane Stark
Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety
900 Court St. - State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Co-Chair Winters, Co-Chair Stark, members of the committee:

My name is Stacy Cowan and I with SEIU Local 503. SEIU represents nearly 60,000 publically funded workers, including frontline workers at the Department of Justice. I would like to provide testimony on the Department of Justice budget.

The Division of Child Support administers the Oregon Child Support Program which enhances the wellbeing of children by assisting families with child support services. They locate parents, establish paternity, enforce and modify child support obligations, and receive and distribute support payments from absent parents.

Every \$1 of state general funds spent on child support is matched by \$2 of federal funds. In FFY 2016, the Oregon Child Support Program collected \$365 million, including \$330.1 million for families, reducing the need for public assistance and avoiding additional costs for taxpayers. In FFY 2016, the Oregon Child Support Program recovered \$29.6 million for state agencies

The impact of a 15% reduction will be dramatic and it will directly hurt vulnerable Oregon families. We should absolutely not make staffing cuts to a program when the return on investment is so high. The legislature should be making strategic investments in programs like child support that have positive impacts in the lives of so many Oregonians.

We also support the block grant model that will allow DOJ attorneys the ability to provide the Department of Human Services caseworkers with continuous representation. This will promote attorney-caseworker collaboration, improve caseworker job satisfaction and retention, avoid the risk of unlawful practice of law by case workers, and improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the child welfare system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
LOCAL 503

PO Box 12159
Salem, OR 97309-1259

1730 Commercial St. SE
Salem, OR 97302

6401 SE Foster Rd.
Portland, OR 97206

1.800.452.2146
www.seiu503.org