



POLK COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Commissioners

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Administrative Officer

April 5, 2017

Representative John Lively, Chair
House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support HB 3067

Dear Chair Lively and Committee Members:

The Polk County Board of Commissioners strongly urges your support of the proposed amendments to HB 3067 creating a pilot CourtCare program to be located in the Marion and Polk county courthouses.

CourtCare will offer free, licensed, quality care for children of caregivers who must attend legal proceedings or complete paperwork at either the Marion or Polk courthouse. Currently, children brought to the courthouse are either allowed to remain in courtrooms or asked to sit unattended in hallways. Neither option is a good one for children who need a safe and nurturing environment. In the courtroom, children are exposed to upset adults in conflict situations, language involving family violence and criminal behavior, and sometimes witness parents being taken into custody. The Court Care program established by HB 3067 will protect children from witnessing traumatic court proceedings and will allow litigants, advocates, and court staff to give their full attention to court business.

The lack of affordable, quality childcare should not prevent parents and caregivers from complying with mandatory court appearances, obtaining a restraining order, challenging an eviction, or exercising their other legal rights. The Court Care program established by HB 3067 will provide necessary childcare to allow parents and caregivers to access the courts.

As per the amendments to HB 3067, it should be noted that both Marion and Polk County would house, but not operate, the CourtCare program. The program would be funded, managed and administered by a non-profit entity.

The Polk County Board of Commissioners urges your support of HB 3067 as amended.

Sincerely,
POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Craig Pope

Jennifer Wheeler

Mike Ainsworth