



## **COMMUNITY ACTION**

2475 Center St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ph. 503-585-6232  
Fax 503-375-7580  
[www.mycommunityaction.org](http://www.mycommunityaction.org)

**HELPING PEOPLE  
CHANGING LIVES**

March 22, 2017

House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports

2017 Oregon State Legislature

Re: HB 3067

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Hack, Vice-Chair Piluso, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jon Reeves and I am writing to educate you on the benefits of HB 3067, which will establish a Court Care program that provides a safe and nurturing place for children while parents or guardians attend court proceedings or conduct court-related business in Marion and Polk counties. The Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.'s primary responsibility is to help people exit poverty. Many of the families and individuals that we serve struggle with rent and child care cost burden which requires them to make hard choices about meeting their basic needs vs. having a roof over their heads. Attending legal proceedings and advocating for their rights may carry significant barriers to their participation on top of an unreal amount of life stress that compounds their compliance and frankly paralyzes them from moving forward in a tangible way.

Currently, children who are brought to the courthouse are either allowed to stay in courtrooms, which exposes them to the ugly details that can accompany legal proceedings, or they are asked to sit in the hallways unattended. Neither option is a good one for children who need a safe and nurturing environment in order avoid trauma that exposure to adult issues might inflict. 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.

Continuing to expect that families can traverse the system while not addressing barriers to their success prevents 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 child care to allow parents and caregivers to access the courts.

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of passing legislation to help our citizens to access needed resources regardless of their economic status.

Sincerely,

Jon Reeves, Executive Director  
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.



# Family Building Blocks

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND FAMILIES TOGETHER

March 21, 2017

House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports  
2017 Oregon State Legislature

Re: HB 3067

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Hack, Vice-Chair Piluso, and Members of the Committee:

Family Building Blocks is writing in support of HB 3067, which will establish a Court Care program in Marion and Polk counties. We believe this program is essential to ensuring children are in a safe and nurturing environment while parents or guardians attend court proceedings or conduct court-related business.

Currently, children who are brought to the courthouse are either allowed to stay in courtrooms, which exposes them to the potentially traumatic details that can be disclosed in legal proceedings, or they are asked to sit in the hallways unattended. Neither option is a good one.

The Court Care program established by HB 3067 will solve this problem and protect children from witnessing traumatic court proceedings and will allow litigants, advocates, and court staff to give their full attention to court business.

HB 3067 will also improve access to justice for low-income families. 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.

Families served by Family Building Blocks face multiple toxic stressors, such as poverty, incarceration, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental illness. Many end up in the court system at some point. Proving vulnerable families dignified access to justice with the assurance that their children will be safe is vital to breaking negative cycles poverty so often creates.

For those reasons, I encourage you to pass HB 3067. Thank you for your consideration.

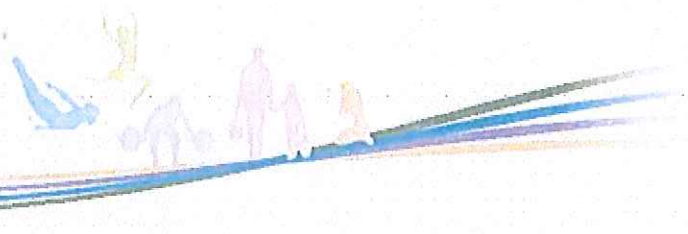
Sincerely,

Patrice Altenhofen  
Executive Director





RAY & JOAN  
**KROC**  
CORPS COMMUNITY CENTER  
SALEM, OR



WILLIAM BOOTH  
*Founder*  
ANDRÉ COX  
*General*  
KENNETH G. & JOLENE K. HODDER  
*Territorial Commanders*  
MAJORS MICHAEL & JANINE ZIELINSKI  
*Divisional Leaders*  
CAPTAINS DAN & KIM WILLIAMS  
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County Coordinators  
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*Corps Officers*  
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GEORGE CARLISLE  
TOM KAY

Thursday, March 23, 2017

House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports  
2017 Oregon State Legislature

Re: HB 3067

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Hack, Vice-Chair Piluso, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Melissa Baurer, Director of Social Services for The Salvation Army and I am writing in support of HB 3067, which will establish a Court Care program that provides a safe and nurturing place for children while parents or guardians attend court proceedings or conduct court-related business in Marion and Polk counties.

Currently, children who are brought to the courthouse are either allowed to stay in courtrooms, which exposes them to the ugly details that can accompany legal proceedings, or they are asked to sit in the hallways unattended. Neither option is a good one for children who need a safe and nurturing environment in order avoid trauma that exposure to adult issues might inflict. 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.

HB 3067 will improve access to justice for low-income families. 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.

HB 3067 and Mid-Valley Court Care will specifically benefit the families and children we serve. Our office primarily works with families who need help with eviction notices, shut off notices, and parents who are fleeing from domestic violence and need financial support. Often, we hear from families that they did not challenge the eviction because they did not have transportation to get to the court appearance or they did not have the support from family or friends to care for their children while attending court. In addition, we have families come to us who were not able to pay their electrical bill because they owe fines resulting from missed court hearings as they did not appear due to childcare concerns.

For those reasons, I encourage you to pass HB 3067. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Baurer  
Social Service Director

The Salvation Army SERVING MARION & POLK COUNTIES

# Marion County Bar Association

P.O. Box 333  
Salem, OR 97308-0333

March 24, 2017

House Early Childhood Subcommittee

Re: House Bill 3067;  
April 6, 2017 Hearing

Dear Committee Members:

The Marion County Bar Association writes this letter to stress the need for and importance of access to free childcare for parents or child caretakers who have necessary court business. The MCBA fully supports the CourtCare concept, or a similar concept that will facilitate court access and participation while also protecting children from court proceedings that are not proper for children.

The MCBA generally does not take positions on pending legislation or legislative matters and is not doing so regarding this particular legislation. The MCBA is, however, very aware of the important need to allow parents and child caretakers who are involved in criminal, domestic violence, child custody and other sensitive proceedings to attend those proceedings, providing them with access to our justice system. Simultaneously, the MCBA is very aware of the need to keep children out of the courtroom (unless a child's presence is required) so the court business is not interrupted, the parties in court can focus on the courtroom proceedings without needing to attend to children, and the children are protected from hearing information or testimony that is not appropriate for the children to hear.

The MCBA welcomes any and all efforts to address the need for free childcare for court proceeding participants who also have child caretaking responsibilities.

Sincerely,



Samuel E. Sears  
Larimer & Sears LLC  
President, Marion County Bar Association

<b>PRESIDENT</b> SAMUEL SEARS
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<b>ADM. ASSISTANT</b> KIMBERLY A. TAYLOR

To the Early Childhood and Family Support Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of Court Care for Polk County. I had to attend multiple court dates for a trial in regards to my son's passing. Unfortunately I was unable to find Child Care for multiple reasons. There were numerous times where I would plan for care and the date would be changed with little notice to me. I had court dates for release hearings and multiple dates leading to the pre-trial, the pretrial was rescheduled multiple times due to different reasons, and through each date set, I was forced to bring my son. The hassle with having to bring my new baby forced me to leave the courtroom many times due to diaper changes, feeding, and just getting fussy. I was forced to miss out on critical information every time I had to leave the room. Along with missing information, I also had to get ready a lot sooner. I had to wake the baby up early, feed him, change him, and sometimes feed him again; the process of getting him ready was sometimes a big hassle.

I was unemployed during these times, so I also could not afford child care and couldn't work around my family's schedule due to dates and times of the court. I had to hold back so much emotion to not upset my son, who was just 5 months old when the court dates began. Not only did I have this beautiful baby to take care of, I was mourning the loss of my first born, who was 15 months old. Having to take my second son to court also caused me to hide my emotions and lengthen my healing process. If there would have been free, licensed care for my son, I would have been able to grieve easier and not be so worried about when I would have to leave the room next. There were points at which there were recordings played, and I was forced to leave the room to take care of my son.

Natalie, an employee with Victim's Assistance, did her best to assist me with my son, but unfortunately sometimes she couldn't help. She did her best effort, but she was also supposed to serve a purpose of emotional support for me, with her stepping out of the room, she was unable to fulfill her job. I appreciate her assistance very much, although I wish she would have been able to sit by me and explain things more as the case went on. If there would have been Court Care during the case that I had to attend, I feel I would have gained so much more knowledge about my son's death and I wouldn't still have questions after a year and a half.

Thank you very much for taking the time to hear my story, and I sincerely hope that soon, there will be Court Care for parents in my situation.

Thank you again,

Heather Davis

Kay D. Toran  
President/CEO

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Portland, Oregon 97214  
Phone: (503) 235-8655  
Fax: (503) 239-6233  
Web: www.voaor.org

Volunteers of America Oregon is  
an independent 501(c)(3)  
charitable organization  
registered within the state of  
Oregon that provides human  
services to populations in need.



Volunteers of America®

OREGON

March 29, 2017

House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports  
2017 Oregon State Legislature

Re: HB 3067

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Hack, Vice-Chair Piluso, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kay Toran and I am writing in support of HB 3067, which will establish a Court Care program that provides a safe and nurturing place for children while parents or guardians attend court proceedings or conduct court-related business in Marion and Polk counties.

Currently, children who are brought to the courthouse are either allowed to stay in courtrooms, which exposes them to the ugly details that can accompany legal proceedings, or they are asked to sit in the hallways unattended. Neither option is a good one for children who need a safe and nurturing environment in order to avoid trauma that exposure to adult issues might inflict. 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.

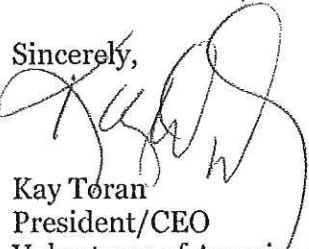
HB 3067 will improve access to justice for low-income families. The lack of affordable, quality childcare should not prevent parents and caregivers from complying with mandatory court appearances, obtaining a restraining order, challenging an eviction, or exercising their other legal rights. The Court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

The Multnomah Bar Foundation and Volunteers of America Oregon opened the first CourtCare program at the Multnomah County Court House 15 years ago. This trauma informed program has served over 15,000 children. Families participating in the program not only have a safe place for their child, but they are also provided resources such as food, clothing, housing, treatment, and therapeutic programs for the family. HB 3067 would provide families' access to justice while protecting the children.

Michelle Ward, Program Director for Volunteers of America Oregon will provide detail testimony that reflects our successful Multnomah County CourtCare program.

For those reasons, I encourage you to pass HB 3067. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Kay Toran  
President/CEO  
Volunteers of America Oregon

*There are no limits to caring®*



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

March 3, 2017

The House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports

Re: CourtCare Program

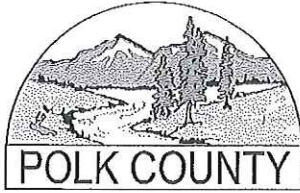
Committee Members,

I am writing in support of the establishment of a CourtCare program in Marion and Polk Counties that will provide a safe and nurturing place for children while their parents are in the courtroom. Children who are brought into the courts are being exposed to situations that only adults should be involved with. CourtCare is a resource that is vital to the protection of children in our communities and is key in ensuring access to justice for primarily low-income families who need assistance in order to exercise their legal rights. Harsh words, confrontations, possibly even seeing parents in handcuffs -- these are traumatic experiences for young children who have to tag along when family members are involved in court actions.

CourtCare is a compassionate way to protect young children from unneeded and unpleasant courtroom situations. I urge you to support the establishment of a CourtCare program in Marion and Polk Counties.

Sincerely,

Samuel Carroll  
CEO  
YMCA of Marion and Polk Counties  
685 Court Street  
Salem, Oregon 97301



# POLK COUNTY

POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE \* DALLAS, OREGON 97338-3177  
CRIMINAL DIVISION \* (503) 623-9268  
SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT \* (503) 623-9269  
VICTIM ASSISTANCE \* (503) 623-9268  
FAX \* (503) 623-7556

## DISTRICT ATTORNEY

AARON FELTON  
District Attorney  
[felton.aaron@co.polk.or.us](mailto:felton.aaron@co.polk.or.us)



April 5, 2017

Hon. Chair John Lively  
Hon. Vice-Chair Jodi Hack  
Hon. Vice-Chair Carla Piluso  
Members of the House Committee on  
Early Childhood and Family Supports

**Re: HB 3067-2**

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Hack, Vice Chair Piluso, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of HB 3067-2, which establishes a CourtCare pilot program in Polk and Marion counties to provide a safe and nurturing place for children to receive while their parents or guardians attend court proceedings or other court-related business.

As District Attorney, I have participated in numerous proceedings in which parents, whether due to financial or other circumstances, have had to bring their young children with them to court. The issues discussed in open court can be very trauma-inducing and wholly inappropriate for children to hear. Unfortunately, due to lack of child care for these parents, their children are forced to remain in the courtroom or sit unattended in the hallway while court proceeds. CourtCare would provide an opportunity for children and families facing these circumstances to receive quality child care in a safe environment while their parents or guardians are conducting court business.

In my experience, one of the most common obstacles people face in meeting their conditions of probation or other court-ordered obligations is the lack of available, affordable, child care. As a prosecutor, I have a responsibility not only to seek justice by holding offenders accountable, but to be supportive of those individuals that are honestly working to be accountable by removing unnecessary roadblocks. HB 3067-2 is a positive step in removing at least one of those roadblocks.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Aaron Felton  
District Attorney





# Marion County

## OREGON

### Board of Commissioners

(503) 588-5212  
(503) 588-5237-FAX

April 3, 2017

#### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

Sam Brentano  
Janet Carlson  
Kevin Cameron

#### **RE: Support HB 3067 with Amendments**

#### CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Dear Chair Lively and Committee Members:

John Lattimer

The Marion 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. 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.

In the fall of 2015, Marion County enlisted Alliance for HOPE International to evaluate Marion County's system of victim services, involving the circuit court, Center for Hope and Safety, Liberty House (child abuse assessment center) and Marion County District Attorney's Office Victim Services Division. Mr. Casey Gwinn, Alliance for HOPE International president, led the evaluation team. While Marion County has a reputation for strong collaborations and high quality services for victims, we found there were victims who fell through the cracks.

The Alliance team encountered a frightening situation while observing a circuit court hearing. A woman who was requesting a restraining order said that her ex-husband, a veteran who had done five tours of duty in Iraq and suffered from PTSD, showed up on her doorstep, unannounced, asking for a place to stay. The woman said she told him that he could stay, but only if he first sought psychiatric services. The veteran was then admitted to the hospital, but released after a few hours. The woman no longer knew his whereabouts and said she feared for her safety, since her ex-husband had

Page 2

April 3, 2017

Representative John Lively, Chair  
Support HB 3067 with Amendments

twice strangled her until she was unconscious. In granting the restraining order, the judge asked if the woman had created a safety plan and urged her several times to connect with advocates from the Center for Hope and Safety. The woman declined, noting that she had been waiting at the court since morning to fill out the paperwork and attend the hearing and had left her children at home alone all day. She needed to quickly return home and said she couldn't afford to take the time to meet with an advocate.

Fortunately, the Alliance team was able to follow up with this woman during a ride-along with the Salem PD that same evening, check on her safety and offer her resources. However, this story offers a poignant example of the difficult choices people who are in harm's way must make when child care is not readily available.

Since the Alliance evaluation report was released, Marion County has implemented a number of service improvements for crime victims. However, gaps still exist, one of which is child care in the courts. Jurisdictions such as Multnomah County that already have CourtCare have found it a vital resource for protecting children and a key to ensuring access to justice for low-income families needing assistance to exercise their legal rights. CourtCare reduces court disruptions and the number of proceedings that need to be rescheduled.

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

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

Sincerely,

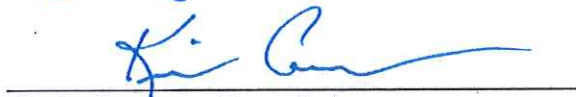
**MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**



Samuel A. Brentano, Chair



Janet Carlson, Vice Chair



Kevin Cameron, Commissioner

2017\_5\_4

House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports  
2017 Oregon State Legislature

Re: HB 3067

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Hack, Vice-Chair Piluso, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Katherine H. Denning and I am writing in support of HB 3067, which will establish a Court Care program that provides a safe and nurturing place for children while parents or guardians attend court proceedings or conduct court-related business in Marion and Polk counties.

Currently, children who are brought to the courthouse are either allowed to stay in courtrooms, which exposes them to the ugly details that can accompany legal proceedings, or they are asked to sit in the hallways unattended. Neither option is a good one for children who need a safe and nurturing environment in order avoid trauma that exposure to adult issues might inflict. 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.

HB 3067 will improve access to justice for low-income families. 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 a family law practitioner, this is a problem I have seen too many times. When pro se litigants bring their children to court, I cannot effectively advocate and do my job. No one wants to expose these children to messy details of their parent's divorce or separation. I've never actually had a case where the children were asked to sit in the hall; the Judge simply resets the hearing and instructs the parent to come back next time without the child. This is obviously an extreme hardship on the parent who took time off work or school. Especially for low-income families, these inconveniences happening too many times can mean the loss of their jobs, which further exasperates the problem.

I would also like to bring the committee's attention to another group who is affected by this problem: middle and high wage earning litigants who pay increased attorney fees for these hearings where their legal counsel must appear and charge for it, only to have the hearing rescheduled. I make this point to illustrate that having children in the courtroom because of inadequate affordable childcare affects everyone who is present, not just the parent who cannot afford the childcare.

For those reasons, I encourage you to pass HB 3067. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K.H. Denning'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'K' and a distinct 'H'.

Katherine H. Denning  
Attorney, Boaz Law Firm

April 3, 2017

House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports  
2017 Oregon State Legislature

Re: HB 3067

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Hack, Vice-Chair Piluso, and Members of the Committee:

We are writing to personally support of HB 3067. Our comments represent our personal opinions and we are not representing the Oregon Judicial Department. In our view the proposed Court Care program offers an excellent opportunity to enhance the access to justice for families with children.

In our roles as circuit judges, we preside over all of the juvenile delinquency and dependency and forcible detainer and eviction cases for Polk County. We also preside over treatment courts for drug abuse and mental illness. We often hear family abuse prevention act cases as well as criminal cases. From this vantage point we see first-hand how the lack of short term drop in childcare impacts parent's and other participant's ability to fully participate in their cases.

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for parents to bring their children to court. These are often very young children who have difficulty sitting still and being quiet. They distract from the process and impact other participant's ability to have their cases heard. Many of these parents are appearing without representation and therefore are forced to simultaneously pay attention to the proceedings and watch their children. It places them at a distinct disadvantage.

The difficulty in maintain a judicial decorum is, of course, the least of the problems created by having children in court. When a parent brings a child to court they are often exposed to traumatic details regarding their parent's case as well as other cases that may come before the court while they are waiting to have the case heard. Parents and the court are placed in an untenable position. We must either leave the children in the court room or have them wait unattended in the hall way.

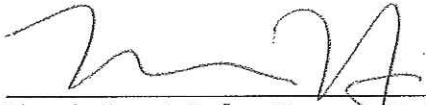
The Court Care program established by HB 3067 protects children from witnessing traumatic court proceedings and allows litigants, advocates, and court staff to give their full attention to court business. It further improves access to justice for low-income families. The lack of affordable, quality childcare 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.

For those reasons, we encourage you to pass HB 3067. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Circuit Court Judge Sally L. Avera

  
Circuit Court Judge Norman R. Hill