



79th LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

May 11, 2017

Co-Chair Richard Devlin
Co-Chair Nancy Nathanson
Legislative Committee on Ways and Means
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for SB 5505, Clackamas County Courthouse Replacement Project

Dear Co-Chairs Devlin and Nathanson:

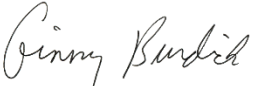
We write to encourage your support of SB 5505, a bill that addresses the Judicial Department's request for \$1.25 million to plan a new Clackamas County Courthouse. As legislators, we strongly support this project because we know it will improve public safety, efficiency, and fairness in our communities.

As the population of Clackamas County grows, the current courthouse facility is decreasingly able to meet public need. Cases are being delayed four to six weeks due to inadequate capacity, which can cause major disruptions to people's lives. In addition, insufficient space in the existing facility has forced the District Attorney's office to rent office space in Oregon City, which consumes public funds that otherwise could be used to support vital county services. Lastly, the existing courthouse does not have a jury assembly space, increasing the risk of improper influence, and limiting a jury's ability to fairly and completely consider cases.

Building a new facility will save money and improve safety by consolidating the District Attorney's office within the courthouse, and by siting the new courthouse near other county services. The new courthouse will be more seismically safe than the current building, and will have better security features, which will keep judges, witnesses, jurors, defendants, and visitors safe from harm. The new facility will also decrease delays, enabling the people who engage with the court system to more quickly resolve their cases and return to a normal routine.

This session, we have been searching for ways to improve safety and fairness in communities across Oregon while reducing costs. The Clackamas County Courthouse replacement is a great step we can take to operationalize these goals. We hope you'll give it close consideration.

Sincerely,


Senator Ginny Burdick


Representative Margaret Doherty


Senator Ted Ferrioli



Representative Mark Johnson



Representative Bill Kennemer



Representative Rick Lewis



Representative Ann Lininger



Senator Alan Olsen



Representative Julie Parrish



Representative Karin Power



Senator Kathleen Taylor



Senator Chuck Thomsen

CC: Speaker Tina Kotek
Senator Fred Girod
Representative Paul Holvey