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Dear Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature,

We are attorneys working for Crabtree & Rahmsdorff, Defense Services, Inc., the Public Defender's Office in Deschutes County. We write this letter in support of HB 2605 which would add a badly needed judgeship for Deschutes County.

I am confident that our presiding judge, Alta Brady, and trial court administrator, Jeff Hall have filled you in the relevant statistics which clearly demonstrate the need for an additional judge in the 11th Judicial District. We won't bore you with repeating those. But for a simple observation, when our office opened in Bend in 1981, the population of Deschutes County was 62,000 and we had 4 ½ judges dedicated to the county (one judge "rode the circuit" of five other counties). Our current population has almost tripled to 181,000, and we now have only 7 judges.

We are more concerned with the effects of insufficient judicial resources than with sheer numbers. The lack of a sufficient number of judges causes significant hardships to our clients, and the community as a whole. We are not able to have our clients enter a plea and be sentenced on the same day in over 80% of our cases. This means that even for those clients who agree to a credit for time served offer, they have to spend an extra week in jail before they can be sentenced. This impacts them and their families, but also the community. Taxpayers of this county have to pay an extra \$100 a day for each day a defendant is kept in jail. This amounts to thousands of dollars every year. Additionally, many clients end up losing their jobs because their employers cannot keep the jobs open for that extra week, causing the clients to resort to public assistance.

Many trials get "bumped" because the court does not have a judge to hear those cases. This results in a wide variety of harms to the clients and the victims, who cannot get closure for the event; to witnesses who have had to clear their schedules to be available for trial, sometimes for three or four times before the case actually goes to trial. Sometimes cases get dismissed for a lack of speedy trial, which many would argue is detrimental to the community.

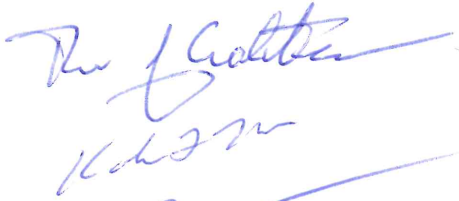
We used to have settlement conferences with the prior presiding judge. These would result in obtaining a fair result for the litigants in our most complex cases. Judge Sullivan was able to negotiate settlements in over 80% of these cases avoiding multiple day (or even multiple week) trials. Now because the caseload has grown significantly the court does not have the resources to conduct these settlement conferences, leaving that many more trials in the que and exacerbating the ability to bring all cases to trial.

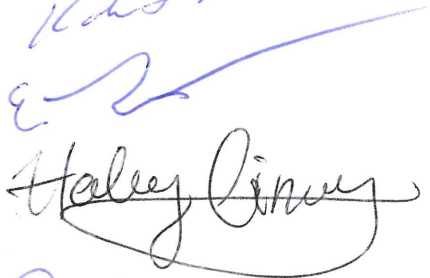
In juvenile cases the lack of judicial resources means that kids cannot get permanency as fast as they should. It is not unusual for us to have to wait six months to get a contested jurisdictional hearing

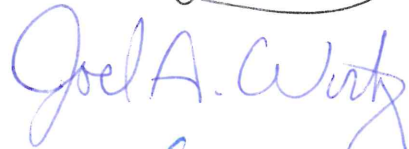
held, despite the fact that the statutes require these to be completed within 60 days. Permanency hearings get delayed for months at a time as do trials for Termination of Parental Rights. Children deserve to have permanency and our statutes have recognized that this needs to be done without delay. However, the realities of the lack of judicial resources dictate that these goals are unattainable without additional help.

Creation of an additional judgeship in Deschutes County would help resolve these problems. We ask you to please pass HB 2605 and provide solutions to these numerous issues.

Sincerely,

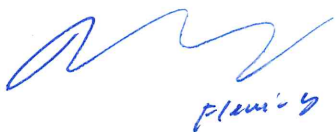







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A. Doyle


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