

**To: House Committee on Judiciary**  
**From: Melissa Baurer, Santiam Hospital Community Liaison**  
**Re: HB 2244-2, Court Care**  
**3-27-19**

Santiam Hospital, Service Integration program is writing in support of HB 2244-2, which will maintain a Court Care program in Marion and Polk counties, and expand to Jackson County.

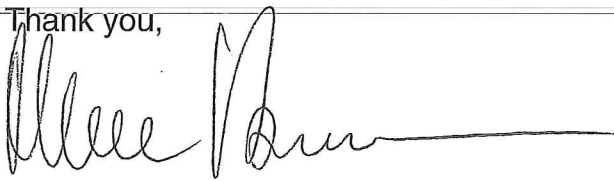
This program is vital to our parents we are connected with. It allows for there to be a safe, nurturing, and supported environment for children of parents who need to attend court proceedings.

Most recently, we were helping support a mom who was fleeing from domestic violence and the children were scared to see their dad that was abusive towards them in the past. Mom called our office and we were able to connect her to Court Care. Her children stayed in a supportive environment and did not have to re-introduce the trauma. This is one example, there are many. Without Court Care, children who are brought to the courthouse are either allowed to stay in courtrooms, exposed to the potentially traumatic details that can be disclosed in legal proceedings, or they are asked to sit in the hallways unattended.

The Court Care program established by HB 3067 in 2017 solved this problem for hundreds of children in Polk and Marion County over the past two years.

Santiam Hospital encourages you to pass HB 2244-2 so more families like the one mentioned above can have Court Care as an option, allowing a safe and supportive environment for their children which in return alleviates stress and decreases the trauma children experience in the courtrooms or the hallways.

Thank you,



Melissa Baurer

Santiam Hospital

Community Liaison/Service Integration Coordinator



# POLK COUNTY

## COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

820 SW CHURCH ST SUITE 100 ★ DALLAS, OREGON 97338-5326  
(503) 623-5226 ★ FAX (503) 623-5326

JODI MERRITT  
DIRECTOR

LISA SETTELL  
SUPERVISOR

March 26, 2019

House Committee on Judiciary  
HB 2244-2  
Hearing Room E

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing this letter of support to highlight the essential service the CourtCare program provides to justice involved clients within Polk County. The lack of adequate and affordable childcare options is an ongoing barrier to the clients we serve here at Polk County Community Corrections. Our clients face daily challenges and struggles to attend a battery of appointments for court, treatment, probation, social service, or self-sufficiency obligations. Having CourtCare available has allowed for an increase in treatment attendance and engagement, court attendance and an overall positive impact on the rehabilitative and prosocial services within the community.

Community Corrections has allocated a small yearly budgetary contribution to the Polk County CourtCare program. This contribution, though very small, has allowed for services to be provided to our Mental Health Court participants, resulting in further engagement in treatment and court attendance. Though we have seen positive outcomes with the Mental Health Court participants, we still face challenges due to budgetary restraints in having CourtCare available five days a week. This is a challenge for our Drug Court participants, resulting in children being brought to court and/or treatment services.

CourtCare has proven to be an innovative and vital resource to justice involved clients in Polk County and I fully support the continuation of this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jodi Merritt".

Jodi Merritt  
Director  
Polk County Community Corrections



# POLK COUNTY

POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE \* DALLAS, OREGON 97338  
(503) 623-8173 \* FAX (503) 623-0896

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners

**CRAIG A. POPE**  
**MIKE AINSWORTH**  
**LYLE R. MORDHORST**

**GREGORY P. HANSEN**  
Administrative Officer

March 26, 2019

RE: Support HB 224-2, Court Care

House Committee on Judiciary

The Polk County Board of Commissioners strongly urges your support of HB 2244-2, which will maintain a Court Care program in Marion and Polk Counties, and expand to Jackson County. We believe this program is essential to ensuring children are in a safe and nurturing environment while parents or guardians attend court proceedings, conduct court-related business, or attend to sensitive personal matters.

Without Court Care, children who are brought to the courthouse are either allowed to stay in courtrooms, and potentially be exposed to traumatic details that can be disclosed in legal proceedings, or they are asked to sit in the hallways unattended. We feel that neither of these are good options.

The Court Care program solved this problem. Since the Court Care Program was established in 2017, it has helped 2,236 children. 1,018 of these children were served in Polk County. This program allows children to be protected from witnessing traumatic court proceedings. It also allowed litigants, advocates, and court staff to give their full attention to court business, while these children were cared for in a high-quality early childhood environment and cared for by professionals.

Court Care has improved access to justice for low income families. Parents that can otherwise not afford quality childcare should not have to miss mandatory court appearances due to lack of childcare. Families who are connected with Court Care are also referred to other community resources including, Family Building Blocks, basic need support the Dallas Resource Center, housing, and employment services. One family who was referred to the resource center was connected with a number of other services including transportation and a washer and dryer. Families in our communities have benefited a great deal from this program. Please help us continue to serve these families in need and pass HB 2244-2.

Sincerely,

Craig Pope, Chair  
Polk County Board of Commissioners

**MARION COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**  
**P.O. Box 333**  
**Salem Oregon 97308**

26 March 2019

Re: HB 2244 support

Dear Legislators:

The Marion County Bar Association urges passage of HB 2244, extending the existing pilot program for CourtCare and adding Jackson County to the pilot program.

CourtCare is not only an important but a crucial service allowing our courts to function better. CourtCare programs provide high-quality no-cost childcare to families with matters pending in court, typically domestic relations, domestic violence, criminal and other matters – matters that children should not be in court to see and hear. These same families often must visit with the district attorney's office, DHS, legal aid and private attorneys, and can access this childcare for these important services as well. Families needing childcare to attend drug court, mental health court, veterans' court, peer court, drug and alcohol classes, COPE (divorce) classes and other special services also take advantage of this program. CourtCare also allows jurors access to the same childcare so that more people can more easily serve as jurors and grand jurors, ensuring the integrity of our jury system. CourtCare programs have also become resource referral sources, helping families obtain access to other social services that are needed and available, such as information on food and housing assistance.

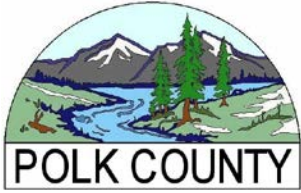
- CourtCare helps ensure access to justice and access to the legal system
- CourtCare helps ensure the integrity of our jury system
- CourtCare helps ensure people can attend court and access court-related services
- CourtCare helps people complete their court-ordered programs
- CourtCare helps ensure kids can be kids and not exposed to "adult" issues and problems
- CourtCare helps give children and families peace of mind

For all these reasons, the Marion County Bar Association urges passage of HB 2244.

Sincerely,



Heather J. Van Meter, President  
Marion County Bar Association



# POLK COUNTY

HEALTH SERVICES

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March 26, 2019

RE: Support HB 2244

Dear Chair Jennifer Williamson, Vice-Chairs Chris Gorsek and Sherrie Springer and Members of the Committee:

Polk County Health Services strongly urges your support of HB 2244-2, expanding CourtCare programming.

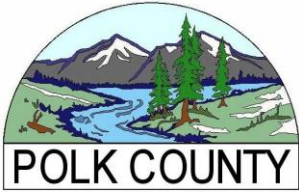
CourtCare offers free, licensed, quality care for children of caregivers who must attend legal proceedings or complete paperwork at either the Marion or Polk courthouse. While this has certainly been beneficial in preventing children from the trauma of hearing adult content conversations it has also done so much more. In Polk County we have seen significant use of Court Care to support access to social service needs. For example, parents are able to attend parenting classes, mental health appointments, medical appointments, attend job interviews and the like which ultimately benefit the overall health of the family. Court care makes it possible for parents to get the help that they need by speaking freely about their circumstances and avoids the potential harm caused to children being exposed to concerns that they should not need to bear.

The lack of affordable, quality childcare should not prevent parents and caregivers from complying with mandatory court appearances, exercising their other legal rights, or seeking the treatment or resources needed to remain healthy and living well. We fully support the expansion of these services in the communities they currently support such as Polk and Marion County as well as expansion to additional communities throughout the state.

Polk County Health services strongly urges you to support HB 2244-2.

Sincerely,

Noelle K. Carroll, Psy.D.  
Health Services Director



# POLK COUNTY

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing a letter of support for the ongoing funding of the CourtCare Program in Polk County. This service is utilized frequently by the clientele of Polk County Behavioral Health on a frequent basis. This is particularly important for those clients who have been mandated to treatment services but lack adequate childcare options. We have had numerous positive outcomes of clients being able to utilize CourtCare while attending treatment services at Polk County Behavioral Health, which has strengthened the client, the family unit, and ultimately the entire community.

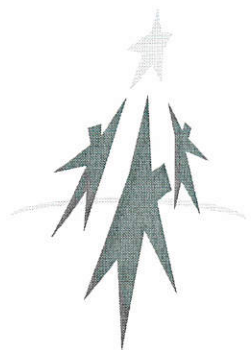
We are keenly aware of various challenges and barriers that our community members face in a rural setting, one of which is having access to quality and affordable childcare. CourtCare has been instrumental in providing a significant gap in services for the clients we serve.

We hope to have the continuation of this vital service and offer our whole hearted support of the CourtCare program.

Sincerely,

*Mark Davis, CADCI*

Mark Davis, CADCI II  
Addiction Services Supervisor  
Polk County Behavioral Health  
503-623-9289  
davis.mark@co.polk.or.us



## 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  
EXIT POVERTY*

March 26, 2019

House Committee on Judiciary  
HB2244-2  
Hearing Room E

Dear Committee Members,

This letter is on behalf Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency – Community Resource Program (MWVCAA – CRP) to endorse CourtCare, HB 2244-2.

The lack of secure and affordable childcare is a leading cause for failed service engagement for parents. To combat this issue, while also promoting the development of self-sufficiency, the concept of CourtCare was introduced. As a result, Mid-Valley CourtCare began in September 2017. Since that time they have assisted 2,046 children. However, this is not only merely 2,046 engagements with youth, it's also 2,046 parental opportunities for success. It's a step along a continuum of essential services bettering the lives of Polk and Marion County families.

As a current co-located partner at the Dallas Resource Center, Mid-Valley CourtCare has been vital in the provision of direct client care. While meeting with resource center staff for emergency financial assistance, families are able to rely CourtCare. This improves access to services while also facilitating family supports such as: diapers, food, and educational material. Mid-Valley CourtCare has also promoted service engagements for adults; enhancing access to addiction treatment, courts/trial, employment services, and DHS. The success of this program is heightened by the comfort parent's feel knowing that their children are well provided for, free of charge.

Therefore, as a representative of MWVCAA-CRP, I support the continuation of CourtCare. A vital, and high quality, service for the betterment of Oregon families.

Sincerely,

Ashley Hamilton  
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency  
Community Resource Program  
Associate Program Director  
[Ashley.Hamilton@mwvcaa.org](mailto:Ashley.Hamilton@mwvcaa.org)



LANDERHOLM

FAMILY LAW

Advocating for your better life.

March 22, 2019

VIA EMAIL

RE: Support for HB 2244

I am writing in support of House Bill 2244. I am a family law practitioner in the Mid-Valley and a board member for the Marion County CourtCare Board.

This is an issue of great importance to me, which is why I donate my free time to assist the Marion County board as well as support Mid-Valley CourtCare in every way that I can. In my experience as a family law litigator, I have had too many experiences with children being brought into the court room. My impression is never that their parents or caretakers intentionally wanted to expose them or that they thought it was an appropriate setting for children- they were just stuck with no other option than to not appear for their court date.

Many court appearances in the area of family law are set very quickly, often the same day. The most common two are motions for Family Abuse Protection Act Orders (civil restraining orders) and temporary parenting time or custody motions based on the legal standard of 'immediate danger.' The facts in these cases are usually horrific and involve abuse of a parent, the children involved, and/or other family members. No one wants children exposed and traumatized by hearing these difficult adult topics. But stopping the hearing until they have appropriate childcare would probably mean *not issuing the order of protection they desperately need right then.*

There is a court efficiency issue to this as well as the obvious child trauma we worry about. There is just not time in our busy court calendar to accommodate resetting matters because of lack of child care. My trials and hearings are commonly set several months out. If a parent or witness has child care fall through that day, resetting the hearing means we have not only wasted a day of the Court's valuable time that could've been filed with something else, but we are looking at resetting our own hearing or trial several months into the future. And if we do decide to go ahead with the child present, the interests of justice are no less hampered because the parent or witness is commonly distracted and hampered in their ability to present their case or testimony.

I will let members of the Bench speak for themselves on the impact they have seen in their courtrooms since CourtCare opened their doors in the Mid-Valley. My personal experience has been very positive. Court staff and Judges are, for the most part, very familiar with CourtCare and have materials on hand. Parents or caretakers who show up with a child/children are politely taken aside and given materials telling them where they can take the child/children that same



Letter to House Committee on Judiciary

March 22, 2019

Page 2

day. Harder to track is the additional impact on these parents and caretakers of the materials they receive by enrolling their children in CourtCare. When picking the children up each family receives a bag of resource materials on other social services that they may need. Staff can also refer them to additional necessary resources such as food assistance and diapers.

The impact in our community of providing CourtCare services has been immediate as far as children being less present in difficult court hearings, and is likely to be far reaching by assisting families undergoing levels of trauma that continue outside of the judicial process. I strongly urge you to support this valuable service, which cannot continue without the passage of House Bill 2244.

Very truly yours,  
LANDERHOLM LAW, LLC



Katherine H. Denning  
Associate, Landerholm Law.



# Family Building Blocks

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND FAMILIES TOGETHER

March 14, 2019



**To: House Committee on Judiciary**  
**From: Patrice Altenhofen, Executive Director, Family Building Blocks**  
**Re: HB 2244-2, Court Care**

Family Building Blocks is writing in support of HB 2244-2, which will maintain a Court Care program in Marion and Polk counties, and expand to Jackson County. From our experience as the Court Care provider in Polk County for the past two years, we believe this program is essential to ensuring children are in a safe and nurturing environment while parents or guardians attend court proceedings, conduct court-related business, or attend to sensitive personal matters.



Without Court Care, children who are brought to the courthouse are either allowed to stay in courtrooms, exposed 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 in 2017 solved this problem for hundreds of children in Polk County over the past two years. These children were protected from witnessing traumatic court proceedings and allowed litigants, advocates, and court staff to give their full attention to court business. These children were instead cared for in our high-quality early childhood environments being cared for by professionals as they played with their peers. **Parents have expressed sincere gratitude for this resource, some saying it was “life-changing.”**



Court Care also 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. Court Care provides 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. Providing 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 2244-2. Thank you for your consideration.

March 20, 2019

Re: House Bill 2244

Dear Chair Jennifer Williamson, Vice-Chairs Chris Gorsek and Sherrie Springer and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to support House Bill 2244 which will continue the 2017 court care programs piloted in Marion and Polk counties and establish a CourtCare program in Jackson county. It was a personal achievement after a concerted effort to open the Marion County CourtCare, offering a safe, clean nurturing environment for children while their parent or guardian attends court proceedings or transacts other court-related business, including mediations, meetings with legal aid, attorney or legal representative, and attending Drug Court, Mental Health Court, and court mandated classes.

More than 2,000 children have been cared for by the Marion and Polk CourtCare programs since September, 2017. Each facility offers free drop-in child care and age appropriate activities staffed by trained and caring individuals. Those children were spared the trauma of hearing courtroom proceedings or waiting in the crowded courthouse hallways. Parents and guardians were able to devote their full attention to court business, knowing that their children were being cared for by licensed professionals. Children were offered supporting experiences that promote early childhood development and connect families with other community resources, e.g., parenting and child development information.

House Bill 2244 ensures funding for three CourtCare programs for two years. Community financial support is needed to fully fund the programs; the bill mandates a partnership between court care programs and counties, requiring financial and other support. The bill offers funding for childcare, removing a barrier for parents and guardians who face legal challenges with limited financial resources. The bill establishes a task force to study and recommend a funding source for a statewide CourtCare program which would improve access to justice for vulnerable economically challenged families and promote early childhood development.

HB 2244 offers a financial solution to barriers that limit access to justice and fosters early education childhood development. Fully funded courts can expand their services to CourtCare programs, preventing children from being exposed to the stressful, emotionally charged courthouse atmosphere. HB 2244 ensures that the two successful pilot programs will continue and builds on their success to expand throughout the state.

Please vote in favor of House Bill 2244. Thank you for your consideration,



Jill Tanner

Founding Member of Marion County CourtCare



*Dedicated to Justice for Women and Minorities*

March 18, 2019

Re: House Bill 2244

Dear Chair Jennifer Williamson, Vice-Chairs Chris Gorsek and Sherrie Springer and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Women Lawyers Foundation writes in support of House Bill 2244 which will continue the 2017 court care programs piloted in Marion and Polk counties and establish a CourtCare program in Jackson county. The Foundation knows that CourtCare programs provide a safe and nurturing environment for children while their parent or guardian attends court proceedings or transacts other court-related business. The Foundation has been a CourtCare program champion in Multnomah, Marion and Polk counties and one of the founding donors of the Marion CourtCare program.

From September 2017 through February 2019, more than 2,000 children were cared for by the Marion and Polk CourtCare programs. Those children were spared the trauma of hearing courtroom proceedings or waiting in the crowded courthouse hallways. Parents and guardians were able to devote full attention to court business, knowing that their children were being cared for by licensed professionals. Children were offered a caring experience that promotes early childhood development and connects families with other community resources.

House Bill 2244 ensures funding for three CourtCare programs for two years. Community financial support is needed to fully fund the programs; the bill mandates a partnership between court care programs and counties, requiring financial and other support. The bill offers funding for childcare, removing a barrier for parents and guardians who face legal challenges with limited financial resources. The bill establishes a task force to study and recommend a funding source for a statewide CourtCare program which would improve access to justice for vulnerable economically challenged families and promote early childhood development.

HB 2244 offers a financial solution to barriers that limit access to justice and fosters early education childhood development. Oregon courts need to be adequately funded and the operations of the court are essential for litigants who need those services. Fully funded courts can expand their services to CourtCare programs. HB 2244 ensures that those two successful pilot programs will continue and builds on their success to expand throughout the state.

Please vote in favor of House Bill 2244. Thank you for your consideration,

*Sarah E. Freeman*

Sarah E. Freeman  
President



# 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*



March 27, 2019

Hon. Rep. Jennifer Williamson, Chair  
Hon. Rep. Chris Gorsek, Vice-Chair  
Hon. Rep. Sherrie Sprenger, Vice-Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

**Re HB 2244-2**


Dear Chair Williamson, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 2244-2, which expands the CourtCare pilot program in Polk and Marion counties to Deschutes and Jackson counties. CourtCare provides a safe and nurturing place for children 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. I personally participate as Polk County's Drug Court prosecutor and see on a weekly basis the benefit CourtCare provides to our participants so they do not have to choose between their treatment and their children's safety.

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 working to be successful by removing unnecessary roadblocks. Since September of 2017, over 1000 children have been served by Polk County's CourtCare program, removing at least some of those roadblocks. HB 2244-2 will further that success throughout Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
  
Aaron Felton  
District Attorney



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of Human Services

Polk County Child Welfare

190 W Ellendale

Dallas, OR 97338

Phone: (503) 623-8118

Fax: (503) 623-5426

December 19, 2018

To whom it May Concern:



Picture this; You are a single mother. You have recently escaped from a terrible domestic violence situation. You are trying to obtain a restraining order against the child's father who has abused you for quite some time and has threatened to kill you and take your child. You are scared and tired. You enter the courtroom which, to you, feels expansive, terrifying and cold. You have no idea what to expect. You have your child with you because you have no family in the area and no means for daycare. Nor do you trust anyone else. As the Judge questions you up at the podium, all you can do is look at your child. You are scared. You do not want your child to hear about the pain you have endured. You do not want your child to see it in your eyes. Your mind becomes scattered and the trauma of the situation does not allow you to say all that you really need to say.

The courtroom is no place for a child. They should never have to endure the goings on of a criminal trial, dependency case or divorce/custody battle. The ripples of these events are traumatic enough. These events are also hugely traumatizing for the adults that are going through them. Court Care in Polk County has been a beneficial service to our community ensuring that in times of need, children have a safe, clean and fun place to go. This eases the stress of the situation in every way. Parents are able to focus at the task at hand and get through it without the worry of adding additional trauma to their child. Polk County Court Care is open several days and times a week, but it would be so great for it to be offered more days and times.

When speaking to some of our clients that have used court care, the reviews are all glowing! Not only does this service relieve the parent's stress, but their children are picking up good social skills in court care. They are being nurtured and getting something to eat. Parents feel safe and a little less stressed knowing that their children are in good hands.

*Court Care is a needed service in our community!*

Thank you,

Katie Martin

Resource Developer- DHS Child Welfare, Polk County

*"Safety, health and independence for all Oregonians"*  
An Equal Opportunity Employer



# 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*

March 27, 2019

RE: Court Care

To Whom It May Concern:

In my role as the Supervisor for Victim Assistance at the Polk County District Attorney's Office, I have seen first-hand how helpful it is for families to utilize Court Care. As we all know, attending a court hearing can be very stressful, and topics in the court room are oftentimes inappropriate for a child to hear. Being able to utilize Court Care is one way that our Victims are able to have some peace of mind; they know their children will be well taken care of by safe, trained staff, and that they do not have to worry about their children being in the court room. This also allows Victims and their supports to be present for the entire court hearing and to focus on the matter at hand.

I was also a Permanency Worker for Polk County Child Welfare for five years, and during that time the families I worked with utilized Court Care extensively. They were able to do this for various reasons, whether it be for an actual court hearing, or for a service appointment they needed to attend in order to comply with their Case Plans. This included mental health counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, parenting classes, etc. Again, having a safe place for the children was a huge relief for these parents. I also was able to hear first-hand from some of the children who attended Court Care and they absolutely loved it. It was an opportunity for them to interact with other children, play in a safe environment, and have their needs focused on by supportive and attentive staff.

Losing Court Care in our community would be a devastating impact to so many, and ultimately would lead to children having to be present for court hearings and to witness the difficult emotions and adult topics that are discussed. Please consider how important this program is for the parents and children of Polk County.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Read

Victim Assistance/MDT Supervisor

503-623-9268 x1586



City of Falls City  
299 Mill Street  
Falls City, OR 97344  
Ph. 503.787.3631

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
JEREMY GORDON

March 27, 2019

**Subject: Testimony to consider in support of HB2244-2**

Dear Esteemed Members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

It is my great honor to write this letter of support for HB2244-2. CourtCare services have lifted barriers for Falls City families to participate in a broad array of court and social services. Due to high rates of disability (30%) and poverty (55%) in Falls City, as well as barriers due to geographic isolation and limited public transportation, Falls City families struggle to meet court dates and access essential social services while balancing the immediate needs of their children.

Unfortunately, childcare outside of school hours is a luxury many cannot afford. Parents of young children should be unencumbered in their pursuit of social services and court attendance and should not be forced to have difficult, adult conversations and interactions in front of their children. CourtCare services have lifted this burden and have increased rates of parents' participation in these essential services leading to better health and mental health outcomes, lower rates of recidivism, and higher rates of utilization of other essential services.

Please consider strongly the continued funding for CourtCare services so that families throughout Oregon have equal access to essential County services.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Gordon  
Mayor, Falls City



# Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Jackson County



Jackson County Justice Building – 100 S. Oakdale, Medford, OR 97501

Telephone (541) 776-7171

FAX (541) 776-7057

March 26, 2019

Lisa C. Greif, Judge

House Democratic Jennifer Williamson, Chair  
Representative Chris Gorsek, Vice-Chair  
Representative Sherrie Sprenger  
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2244

Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee:

A coalition of cross-sector Jackson County partners strongly urge your support of the proposed HB 2244. This funding would create base funding derived from surcharges to some judicial system fees for a CourtCare program to be located in Medford. This program would provide free, licensed, high-quality care for children of caregivers who must attend legal proceedings or related court-related appointments. Further, this will establish the ability for our coalition of community partner to provide a safe and nurturing place for children at times when they would otherwise be exposed to the stress of a courtroom experience or be left in substandard care.

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 CourtCare program established by HB 2244 will protect children from witnessing traumatic court proceedings and will allow litigants, advocates, and court staff to give their full attention to court business.

In providing a safe place for children to be in a stress-free and developmentally-appropriate environment, it will reduce family stress and be a much healthier setting than the court room. In addition, this will allow families to be made aware of or connected with important services that are designed to support family stability such as Head Start, WIC, food stamps, and literacy.

- A safe, supportive haven for children whose parents visit the courthouse; and
- A vehicle for connecting families to needed services.

These timely and efficient referrals will be facilitated through one of the closed-loop referral system currently being developed in our region and facilitated in a strength-based way by the highly qualified staff. We anticipate that through such wrap-around care, families will add assets to their lives that prevent recidivism and improve overall outcome.

Our region is an ideal fit of this expansion as we have the right partners around the table committed to providing match funding. These partners represent our judicial, health care, and early learning systems. Other funding source for this resource to families could potentially include a suggested \$5 donation and/or an option for jurors to sign over their \$10 stipend to CourtCare. Currently, the \$10 stipend goes for snacks for jurors during orientation.

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 CourtCare program established by HB 2244 will provide necessary childcare to allow parents and caregivers dignified access to the courts.

As per the amendments of HB 2244, it should be noted that Jackson County would not house or operate the CourtCare program. The program, located near the courthouse, would be managed and administered by local non-profit entities and would be available for ages six weeks to 12 years old.

Previous pilot projects of CourtCare have shown remarkable success in Marion and Polk Counties. Our coalition urges your support of HB 2244 as amended.

Sincerely,

Judge Lisa Greif, Jackson County Circuit Court  
Bob Strosser, Chair, Jackson County Board of Commissioners  
Rick Dyer, Jackson County Board of Commissioners  
Colleen Roberts, Jackson County Board of Commissioners  
Sunny Spicer, Executive Director, Kid Time Discovery Experience  
Brad Russell, CEO/Executive Director, Rogue Valley YMCA  
Jennifer Mylenek, Executive Director, CASA of Jackson and Josephine Counties  
Lori Paris, President and Chief Executive Officer, Addictions Recovery Center  
Beth Heckert, Jackson County District Attorney  
Dee Anne Everson, Executive Director, United Way of Jackson County  
Susan Fischer-Maki, Health & Education Manager, AllCare Health  
Tammi Pitzen, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Center of Jackson County  
Mary-Curtis Gramley, Family Program Coordinator, Oasis Center  
Alan Ledford, Executive Director, OnTrack Rogue Valley  
Lisa O'Connor, Executive Director, Family Nurturing Center  
Patricia Foster, Program Coordinator, The Family Connection  
René Brandon, Executive Director, Southern Oregon Early Learning Services



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DAWN THOMPSON  
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANAGER

MARION COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
P.O. BOX 14500, 555 COURT ST NE  
SALEM, OREGON 97309

March 25, 2019

Re: House Bill 2244-2

Dear Chair Jennifer Williamson, Vice-Chair Chris Gorsek and Sherrie Springer and Members of the Committee

I am writing in support of House Bill 2244-2 which will continue CourtCare programs in Marion and Polk Counties as well as expand a program to Jackson County.

Since the time of its launch we have seen the CourtCare program make a significant impact in the lives of the victims we serve. It has become a resource that our advocates refer families to on a regular basis. And the need for a program like this has only grown since its start in 2017. Our office continues to see a high demand for a safe and healthy place where families can take their children while they attend court proceedings.

Before CourtCare families were forced to figure out where to leave their children in order to apply for protective orders, attend hearings, or seek out legal assistance. Too many times we have heard victims tell us they wanted to come to court, but they didn't have anyone to leave their children with, so they were not able to attend. Or they came, but had to bring the children with them. As victim advocates we know firsthand how difficult it can be for a parent to have to bring their children to court and have them see and hear things that can potentially traumatize them.

The crime victims we serve can face many obstacles and barriers they have to overcome in order to begin to heal from their victimization. For some victims part of that healing process includes the ability to meaningfully participate in the court process, attend the hearings in their case and make victim impact statements to the court. Having a safe place for a victim to leave their children would eliminate one of those obstacles and allow them the chance to exercise their right to participate in the process and not worry about the high cost of day care.

The continued support for the CourtCare programs is a step in insuring crime victims in our community have access to a needed resource that will allow them to fully participate in the criminal justice system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Susana Escobedo  
Director, Victim Assistance Division  
Marion County District Attorney's Office