

March 19, 2019

To whom it may concern,

My name is Allan Rucker, and I am a Certified Recovery Mentor working at the Addictions Recovery Center. I am also a 2006 Community Family Court graduate. I am sharing my CFC story with you as a heartfelt advocacy for the program.

I include a back story here, the only reason being to let you all know the type of person I was growing up, and so in turn, you will better understand the impact Community Family Court had in forever changing my life in this most positive manner.

As a child, I grew up in a dysfunctional and sometimes violent household, where “escaping” was a normal process for me, no matter how it came about. With help from my lineage, I was exposed to alcohol at a very young age. At the age of eleven, I started using tobacco first, then marijuana, and by the age of 13, I was a full-blown drug addict, using basically any and every drug I could. I also started committing crimes and rebelling against the “system” in whatever way I could. My teenage and young adult years were full of anger, depression and suicidal ideation. With those emotions came jail stays, broken relationships, an overdose, and extremely bad decisions. I bounced around from place to place, state to state, always extremely lost in my addiction. I was not okay, by any means, and I was not what you would call a “productive member of society”.

Fast forward to 1999, and a son was born to me. By the time he was born I had quit using some of the drugs, but I was still using excessive amounts of alcohol and pills daily. I remember sitting in the window of the hospital room, holding my newborn child, and I knew that it was not about me anymore. Here was this tiny little dude that needed me to be there for him in life. But even the love I had for my son could not seem to stem the tide of my addiction. I continued to use on a daily basis, and in even larger amounts.

My marriage with my son’s mother could not survive both of our addictions, and in 2002, we divorced, and entered an extremely nasty arena of pure conflict, usually centered around the custody of our child. Primary custody of our son was changed up three or four times, with him going to live with whoever was doing better than the other at any given time, or, to whomever could fabricate the better lie to tell the judge. Neither of us could see the negative effects we were placing on our child at that time.

My ex-wife’s story is really her own to share, but a point of time happened where she became pregnant again, and at a doctor’s appointment, tested positive for an illicit substance, and DHS was called. At that point, I was not in any trouble yet, and they were looking to place my son with me. We had a Family Decision Meeting scheduled, and attended, where alcohol was smelt on my breath, and I tested positive on a urinalysis for it. This happened on two different occasions. My ex-wife had already pled into and been accepted into CFC, and it was then offered to me. I was accepted in as well, although I asked for a different judge than my ex

wife had, citing less chaos for all involved. And so, I started my seventeen-month journey into a new and better life.

When I arrived in CFC, I still clung to that rebellious attitude, and I was convinced that I could do everything my way, and that it would work. I had yet to see that my way was not working for me anymore. I was then introduced to Judge Schively, who has since retired. He was a stern, but fair judge, and he soon made it clear to me that it would be in my best interest to accept and participate in the program the way he and the team were lining it out for me. I still had the rebellious streak but was smart enough to see that he meant business. I was also very scared of the thought of my son being placed in foster care. So, I started doing as I was asked, and next thing I knew, doors started opening for me everywhere. One of the biggest things I fought against was having to go to 12 Step meetings and acquiring a sponsor there. That was so out of my comfort zone, but I did not want a sanction, so I did it. This might very well be the best decision that was ever made for me, because as of today, I still attend meetings, and I still do step work with that very same person who agreed to sponsor me back then when I finally got up enough courage to ask him to do so. Becoming part of the 12 Step community also had a huge impact on my life and on my behaviors. I started noticing that I was changing, and every time I next appeared in CFC court, the reports started getting better. But I am a drug addict, and I did not quite have the tools yet to confront all these new feelings of mine, and I became overwhelmed and I relapsed. It was that angel of a son of mine that caught me, and he told me that I needed to call my sponsor. What 6 or 7-year-old child tells their father that he needs to call his sponsor? For me though, it was the look of pain in his eyes as he said it that I will never forget, and hopefully never, ever experience again. This was truly my bottom for me, and it was also my first experience with the Higher Power that would become so integral in my life from that point forward. So, I called that sponsor and he immediately came to my house and helped start the journey of me getting clean again. Both CFC and my sponsor supported me, and never left my side, and though it was a struggle, I got clean once again, and have been so ever since. My team at family court also helped me to once again acquire permanent housing, get my driver's license back, and to gain employment. I would have to say though that the thing they did that really touched me the most was the love and support they showed my son. When I was doing good, they rewarded me with tickets to take him to the movies, and that year on Christmas, they brought him a few presents. I truly believed that they cared about our welfare, especially his, and that was the key for me to being able to unlock the closed doors in myself.

I had been searching all my life for acceptance and faith, and when my CFC team showed me their belief in me, along with my sponsor and new friends in the Recovery community, then I started to believe in myself. I started to have that acceptance and faith in myself and my journey. I am still a work in progress, but I prosper and heal a bit more each day. I truly believe that this would not be the case, if I had not been accepted into the CFC program. I believe that my addiction would have killed me, and that my son would've been without his father today.

So, now it is 2019, and as I write this, I am less than a month away from celebrating 12 years completely clean from all drugs, including alcohol. This is the most important factor in my life, as I know that without my Recovery, all else would be lost. I am blessed to be in a relationship to the most beautiful and supportive woman for around 7 years now and married for almost 4 of those years. We recently purchased our own home, and we are certified foster parents to our 3-year-old granddaughter, who has lived with us since she was one year old. This beautiful little girl, who has Papa wrapped around her little thumb, doesn't ever have to see grandma or I loaded because we have broken that link in the chain of addiction. That is a huge and wonderful gift. That little boy of mine who steadfastly walked alongside his father through CFC, addiction and 12 step meetings, divorce, daily struggles, and tears is now a healthy, employed 19-year-old who is on his way to becoming his own man, and I am super proud of him. I have been employed at the Addictions Recovery Center for almost 5 years, where every day I try to help struggling addicts get clean. I am also involved in two non-profits, one of which is bringing a Recovery Café to the valley, and another that empowers abused children to not live in fear. They are both wonderful organizations and I am blessed to be a part of their dream. Today I am humbled by and extremely grateful for my journey thus far.

I try to be the best father, son, husband, grandpapa, employee, and friend, as possible. I pray for this. I call it "Walking in Grace", and I strive for it daily. Thank you for helping me with that CFC. Thank you to Judge Schively, Josh Miller, Traci Roberti, John Hamilton, and thank you to Miss Lisa McCreadie, who is absolutely one of my most favorite human beings on this planet. Thank you for not giving up on me and thank you for planting the seed for me.

Wow, I have accomplished what I never thought was possible, or even wanted for that matter... I have become that "productive member of society."

Sincerely,

Allan D. Rucker

Below is the quote that I read to the audience on the day I graduated CFC:

"The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict. We concentrate on recovery and how we feel, not what we have done in the past. Old friends, places and ideas are often a threat to our recovery. We need to change our playmates, playgrounds and playthings.

When we realized we are not able to manage on our own, some of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostility and resentment. Petty frustrations, minor setbacks and loneliness often made us feel that we were not getting any better. We found that we suffered from a disease, not a moral dilemma. We were critically ill, not hopelessly bad. Our disease can only be arrested through abstinence.

Today we experience a full range of feelings. Before coming into the fellowship, we either felt elated or depressed with very little in between. Our negative sense of self has been replaced by a positive concern for others. Answers are provided and problems are solved. It is a great gift to feel human again.

What a change from the way we used to be! That's how we know that the program works. It is the first thing that ever convinced us that we needed to change ourselves, instead of trying to change the people and situations around us. We discover new opportunities. We find a sense of self-worth. We learn self-respect. This is a program for doing just those things. By working the steps, we come to accept a Higher Power's will; this acceptance leads us to recovery. We lose our fear of the unknown. We are set free."



# JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

**District Attorney**  
**Criminal**

**Beth Heckert**  
*District Attorney*

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March 20, 2019

The Honorable Jackie Winters  
The Honorable Carla Piluso  
Co-chairs, Public Safety Subcommittee

RE: Treatment Courts in Jackson County

Dear Senator Winters and Representative Piluso:

In Jackson County we have three different treatment courts to address the issues of defendants. Each of those courts specialize in a particular area. Our Recovery Opportunity Court is a drug court program serving defendants of whom the majority are eligible for a prison sentence. Over the past several years we have admitted 40-70 new participants each year. So far this fiscal year, 121 participants are being served by this program. Our Community Family Court serves approximately 70 participants a year. The individuals who participate in this program are parents with DHS child welfare cases who have substance abuse issues. Our mental health court focuses on defendants who have a mental health diagnosis and are willing to participate in mental health treatment. Not all participants are successful but I've had the opportunity to attend graduations from each of these programs. At those graduations it is clear the participants have rebuilt their lives, obtained employment, reconnected with family, have hope for the future and are very thankful for the opportunity to participate in a treatment court. Without the continued support, these programs are not likely to continue. Thank you for this opportunity to urge you to continue to support treatment courts and if you ever get the opportunity to attend a graduation, please do, so you can see for yourself the impact these programs have.

Sincerely,

Beth Heckert  
District Attorney

3/21/19

To whom it may concern,

Hello my name is crystal and I am a drug court graduate 2010. I say this with pride because on March 5th of this year I celebrated 10 years free from methamphetamines. Today I have a life that I never dreamed I could have, I have an associates in Human Services, I am a manager at a nonprofit where I am working with law enforcement and helping train them on how to respond to victims of domestic violence as well as managing 4 other advocates. Before I was promoted I would respond to sexual assault calls at the hospital and I was the court advocate working in the justice building helping people with restraining orders. I am married and I am part owner of a mechanic shop here in the rogue valley. The only reason I have this life is because of Drug Court in Jackson County Oregon.

My story is filled with Domestic Violence. Drug abuse from the age of 11. Permanent rights of both children gone from the state of Oregon. Multiple felonies in multiple states I was once transported to South Dakota and California. \$10,000 in restitution. Needle scars all over my body. The picture you have in your mind is what I was but ten times worse. I had nothing to lose when I hit the court room of the Honorable Judge Crain. She didn't have to take a chance on me. I have had plenty of chances before and in her court room. I had been in every treatment center in this valley multiple times and was kicked out or ran every time. But thank god for me that she took a chance on me. I can Assure you and I don't say this lightly I know that if she would have not taken that chance on me I would be dead.

The structure of the treatment court was like nothing I ever had in my life. I was held accountable. I was taught how to get a job, pay my restitution, and get my license back. I was given encouragement, support and love when I felt I was not worthy of that. I learned to love my self and take pride in my accomplishments. I work every day with people just like me who are stuck and scared and lost. I tell them about my experience with drug court and how it changed my life completely in every way. I assure you I would not be who I am today without it. I had tried for years nothing worked, I couldn't even do it for my kids. My daughter came to live with me when she was 16 and is now 18 high school graduate and is on her own in college. That \$10,000 restitution I mentioned earlier is almost paid off it's down to \$2,000. To not fund treatment courts and for them to go away would be devastating to this Valley.

I work every day with ordinary people, parents, grandparents, wives, husbands, and foster parents who are stuck in the cycle of addiction and crime from their family members. I get to look at them and tell them my story tell them to not give up hope. Maybe their family member will be offered treatment court because sometimes that's the only hope they have left. Treatment centers are booked months out and it's easy to fall through the cracks trust me I did it for years. That doesn't happen in treatment court. They know everything about you and they still believe in you they hold you accountable and its wrap around services. The alternative is in and out of county jail or prison. Let's be honest the only thing I ever got from jail and prison was new ideas for more crimes and more drug connections. I really hope that Treatment court stays in the Rogue Valley and keeps changing lives. I hope another addict gets a chance at a life. Another child is reunited with its recovering parent.

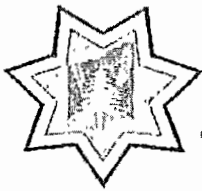
If you would like to talk more please feel free to call or email any time!

Grateful for Treatment court!

Crystal Buhler

541-840-4273

[crystalneiman@yahoo.com](mailto:crystalneiman@yahoo.com)



**JACKSON COUNTY**  
*Community Justice*

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03/19/19

**Oregon Legislative Assembly**

*I wanted to write a letter of support for the Jackson County Mental Health Court, while sending this, I hope I'm able to convey the importance of the program as well as the impact of the great team work that is a part of this important program.*

*I've been fortunate to be a part of the program from the beginning and I've been graced with the presence of some fantastic teammates that include, Judge Greif, local law enforcement, the courts, jail staff, mental health and attorneys. Our team has worked really hard to make sure we are innovative in planning and managing the client caseload as well as taking information from each of team member in a thoughtful manner. All of the people at the table are there because of a common goal for the community we are serving and mutual respect of each person and their place in the system. All of us have a goal of working to integrate systems so that all parties are represented fairly and appropriately and because we care about this population and the need for support and system change.*

*This population is very difficult to identify as well as manage and Judge Greif is a leader that has chosen each of us to bring our strengths and skills to the table. She is a great leader who pays attention to systemic needs and changes and has a gifted way of navigating those waters while making changes and leaving people and situations better than how she found them.*

*So many clients enter our legal system due to their mental health conditions and historically the system has not had a place for them to find safety and support. With Mental Health Court, we are able to look at those cases that can be addressed where the client and the community safety needs are being met with wrap around services and long term goal support. Our team is continually finding ways to address the cases while doing our best to make sure people's lives can return to stability as well as re-enter the community as soon as possible and without possible irreversible damage to those involved, including both clients and victims.*

*This program has helped me, as an officer, to better navigate my daily job of supervising a mental health caseload outside of mental health court and I'm fortunate to be in a community that recognizes a need for change and has made the choice to continue to work hard for it. Our Mental Health Court team has made this possible by building support and growing ideas for change, and I am very grateful to continue to be a part of it.*

Thank you,

Dana Cline

03/18/2019

To the Oregon Legislators:

My name is Nadara Kent and I would like to express my gratitude to the Mental Health Court services of Jackson County. My sister participated in the Mental Health Court program for 3 years and graduated successfully in 2017. She had a felony arson charge at the time and it was dismissed upon her graduation from the program. She was able to have her own apartment and take care of herself for quite a long time. Sadly she started using drugs again and has since been in the State hospital awaiting a competency hearing so she can face her new charges. My sister is unable to take care of herself. Unfortunately I am no longer able to allow her to live with me as she has become increasingly manic and that coupled with her use of drugs has made it unsafe for me.

I would just like to thank the Mental Health Court program for all the help. Thank you so much. I believe the Mental Health Court program is a much needed program for this community. Without them my sister would have been on the streets and probably dead by now. If you have any questions for me my number is 541-821-4650.



**JAN L. PERKINS  
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March 19, 2019

To: Legislative Branch, State of Oregon

Re: Mental Health Courts

My office has for the past three years been representing a gentleman, who had applied for Social Security disability benefits. The client has been a challenge because, in part, he denied suffering from mental health issues, while medical records indicated clearly his problems with schizophrenia. He had several altercations with law enforcement in his history, which were due to his bizarre behaviors and actions in public. The behaviors were bizarre, but, were not threatening to others and the system appeared to have little in the way of help for the individual. He was not held in jail and, even when psychiatric intervention was recommended, he simply walked away and avoided incarceration.

This situation changed when the client was picked up following another truly bizarre incident and charged with arson and property damage. He was required to undergo psychiatric evaluation, with the result that he was sent to the Oregon State Hospital. Since he has been returned, months later, to Jackson County his transition has been monitored by the Jackson County Mental Health Court. It is the Mental Health Court, which helped my office to obtain the records necessary to convince the Social Security Administration Appeals Council to reverse the client's unfavorable hearing decision. It is the Mental Health Court, which helped make it possible for him to stay in the transitional housing program, provided for the client's welfare, and has ensured that he has remained on track to full recovery. We truly do believe that without the Mental Health Court, our client would once again be roaming the streets of Medford, homeless, not able to continue with his medications, and without positive direction. Finally, there is a part of the Judicial system, that can meet the needs of severely mentally ill people, who desperately need help.

If the legislature has any questions, we are available to attempt to provide such answers as we have.

Respectfully,

Jan L. Perkins



The Honorable Jackie Winters  
The Honorable Carla Piluso  
Co-Chairs, Public Safety Subcommittee

Dear Senator Winters and Representative Piluso,

I am writing to ask that you fully fund the Oregon Judicial Department (SB5513).

As you know, we have been facing a judicial crisis in our nation and the State of Oregon is no different. We need adequate funding of our judicial Department, not only to meet the basic justice needs of our citizenry but also to fund programs within it that affect our most vulnerable populations. I am writing to you today about just such a program in Jackson County.

As I'm sure you are aware the mentally ill population (including those addicted to substances) is often served poorly by the regular judicial system. Outcomes for mentally ill adults in the jail and prison systems are poorer than those who receive mental health treatment in the community. On the Judicial side of the equation, the mentally ill spend longer time in jail, utilize more court time and cost society significantly more than non-mentally ill adults.

Programs like Mental Health Court in Jackson County are a positive step in reigning in those extreme costs, which not only makes our judicial system more effective, but help clients that come to the ColumbiaCare Outpatient Program in Jackson County get effective and needed treatment.

Several of our clients have been part of the Mental Health Court program here in Jackson County. These clients receive focused attention from a judge briefed in Mental Health issue and a team of prosecutors, and community partners that help wrap around these vulnerable adults. The result is that many of our clients with legal issue can stay in the community, receive good quality mental health treatment, and even learn to be more self-sufficient. In particular, this has been beneficial for our clients who do not want to accept their mental illness and/or take psychiatric medications with problematic side-effects. Those clients are often willing to participate in the Mental Health Court program to avoid more severe penalties. For example, this can result in an situation where we can get a client who is experiencing active auditory hallucinations to cooperate and take medication that will reduce or eliminate soe same hallucinations and help him focus more effectively. This in turn highly increases our chances of getting the client to stay on these medications. Positive effects snowball up and it is easier to find adequate housing or even improve family relationships that are key to the success of

many clients. Don't we all want to help as many people become productive and stay out of the legal system as possible?

Without programs like Mental Health Court our clients who commit a crime would just end up in Jail and the regular judicial system. Jails are not designed to be a source of primary treatment for mental health and our clients will not receive the care nor learn skills to increase their motivation to get better. My greatest fear when I see these funding issues come up is that programs like Mental Health Court are the first to be cut. I don't think legislators intentionally try for this, but I have seen too many cuts to services for the Mentally ill that end up costing society more in the long term. In my 26 years in the mental health field, funding expands slowly but is cut severely and very quickly to meet budgetary constraints.

Please fund the judicial department, and specifically those programs that help nonviolent mentally ill offenders get the services that will help them get better. Not only has it been shown to save counties and states money all over the US, but it's the right thing to do for these individuals.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I am more than willing to speak with you and answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,



Jason Farris, MS LPC  
Outpatient Director of Clinical Operations  
ColumbiCare Services, Inc.  
M: 541-200-2900, C: 916-895-6249





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CASA Executive Director, non-voting



March 18, 2019

To State of Oregon Legislators:

This letter is in support of legislative funding for Community Family Court (CFC) and the Oregon Department of Justice for continued administration of treatment courts. CFC has provided a practical response to parents who struggle with substance abuse and/or child neglect by applying a method of support and accountability provided by relevant community partners and Community Family Court Judges. Working with parent/s in this manner helps them find healing and success, diverting them from incarceration and diverting children from foster care by keeping families together. The healthy outcomes to families because of the treatment court system are immeasurable, but the cost savings to foster care and the corrections systems are also more than significant.

The following are two examples I want to share with you.

*A CASA Volunteer commented: CFC is so important for the family. It provides the wrap-around services and monitoring the families need as they get their kids back and are so new in recovery. I appreciate it as a CASA because everyone is at the table and talking about everything affecting the family's stability in great detail. The families are supported 360 degrees. Susie Wahl (CFC Coordinator) and our Judges do a fantastic job motivating the family and building their healthy support network alongside them. Every case should be in Community Family Court.*

A family's personal story at graduation from CFC:

*"Thanks for everything you do. Here is the story of two heroin addicts and the unbelievable story of survival is a true miracle because of people like you. I had zero chance of survival and I survived ☺ our son's prognosis of cerebral palsy. I had 14 years of heroin addiction, overdoses, infections, facing prison...because of people like you, this (success) was possible. No judgment from the start and believing in something that could never happen...but you did. Thank you!!! We love our baby and love life and know how precious it is and the second chance we have been given. We will work to do more good in our sober life and pay it forward."*

The success stories are abundant, thanks to the special dedication and effort of our Judges and so many others. The success stories give us all renewed hope and remind us why we enlisted in this work to begin with. I hope you will support this request that will provide for the continued success of treatment courts in Oregon.

Respectfully,

*Jennifer Mylenek*  
Jennifer Mylenek

Executive Director

CASA of Jackson and Josephine Counties

Mission Statement



The mission of CASA of Jackson County is to utilize the strength of our highly trained volunteer advocates to be the voice for abused, neglected and vulnerable children who are wards of the court and are in need of nurturing, safe and permanent homes. CASA of Jackson County is a 501C3, non-profit organization. Tax id: 94-3215621. No goods or services were given in exchange for this donation.

# 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 21, 2019

Tim Gerking, Judge

The Honorable Jacki Winters  
The Honorable Carla Piluso  
Co-chairs, Public Safety Subcommittee

Dear Senator Winters and Representative Piluso:

Good day. I am the Presiding Judge of the Jackson County (Medford) Circuit Court and I am writing to you in support of SB 5513 which concerns the Oregon Judicial Departments' Proposed Budget for the 2019–2021 Biennium. By way of a brief personal introduction, I have been a lawyer (37 years as a civil trial lawyer) and a judge (eight years) for 45 years combined. I have served as the Presiding Judge here in Jackson County for the last four years.

The Jackson County Circuit Court is comprised of ten (10) judicial officers (nine (9) elected judges and one (1) hearings officer). The judges each have assigned dockets—four (4) of us are assigned to a criminal docket, three (3) of us, including myself, preside over a civil docket and two (2) are assigned to a juvenile docket. Our hearings officer has been delegated a variety of functions that overlap those three primary areas of law.

We all had our separate reasons for aspiring to become a trial court judge. For most of us, it is a way to serve our community, to provide help to those who are in crisis and it is also a means to give back to the legal profession. Again, for most of us, serving as a judge is a calling and is rewarding beyond measure.

The work is also incredibly difficult and stressful. Most judges sit in court a good part of each day hearing and ruling on one case after another, and sometimes the judge is occupied by extended evidentiary hearings or trials involving complicated facts and legal issues. Many of these cases are contentious, hard to listen to and difficult to understand the motivations of

the parties. For example, a judge might spend hours arraigning criminal defendants or performing sentencing decisions involving morally deviant or cruel fact patterns. A civil judge might regularly hear domestic cases where parents, who share a mutual animosity toward each other, are fighting over their children. Juvenile judges regularly hear cases involving shocking forms of child abuse and neglect. An inordinate percentage of these cases have an overlay of drug addiction and abuse. None of this is pleasant; judges never get used to it; much of what we hear is painful and takes a terrific toll on all of us.

The Oregon Judicial Department needs help from the Legislature to perform its vital societal role of protecting the public, especially our children and our most helpless and vulnerable citizens, and enforcing the Rule of Law. Without additional funding, as our Chief Justice has so eloquently explained, I am concerned that our battle to improve public safety and civility is a losing one. This struggle was once exclusively fought in adversarial courtroom proceedings; however, we have since realized in more recent years that fighting these battles in treatment settings, like drug courts, community family courts and mental health courts, dramatically improves our chances of saving lives and salvaging others from the scrap heap of incarceration.

Courts around the state need additional judicial resources to establish treatment courts and to timely and efficiently process the ever-increasing workloads that our courts are faced with. For example, here in Jackson County we have a drug court, a mental health court and a community family court, but to administer those essential components to our court, criminal and juvenile judges are performing critical administrative and oversight responsibilities at the expense of their primary dockets. This causes backlogs, inordinately long sessions, unreasonable delays, dissatisfaction, disillusionment and denials of access to justice.

Courts are also in need of additional funding to increase judicial compensation. I am sure you are well aware by now of the woefully low compensation Oregon trial court judges and appellate court judges receive. Sure, we all would like to make more money, but as far as I am concerned,

this is not about the current cadre of Oregon judges (at age 70, it's frankly too late for me anyway); it's about the vital importance of recruiting the best, the brightest and most experienced lawyers in Oregon to become judges. Far too little is said about the crisis that exists in Oregon in terms of the lack of judges who have a significant background in civil law or civil trial practice. It is hard to persuade an experienced civil trial lawyer to run for election to become a judge if she or he is already making up to twice the salary of a judge. We need to make judicial salaries more competitive and attractive to those committed lawyers who are willing to give back to their community.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy C. Gerking', written in a cursive style.

Hon. Timothy C. Gerking  
Presiding Judge  
Jackson County Circuit Court

cc: Tina Qualls, Trial Court Administrator, Jackson County Circuit Court  
Phillip Lemman, Acting Deputy State Court Administrator

# Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Jackson County



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

Telephone (541) 776-7171

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March 21, 2019

Tim Gerking, Judge

The Honorable Jacki Winters  
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Dear Senator Winters and Representative Piluso:

Good day. I am the Presiding Judge of the Jackson County (Medford) Circuit Court and I am writing to you in support of SB 5513 which concerns the Oregon Judicial Departments' Proposed Budget for the 2019–2021 Biennium. By way of a brief personal introduction, I have been a lawyer (37 years as a civil trial lawyer) and a judge (eight years) for 45 years combined. I have served as the Presiding Judge here in Jackson County for the last four years.

The Jackson County Circuit Court is comprised of ten (10) judicial officers (nine (9) elected judges and one (1) hearings officer). The judges each have assigned dockets—four (4) of us are assigned to a criminal docket, three (3) of us, including myself, preside over a civil docket and two (2) are assigned to a juvenile docket. Our hearings officer has been delegated a variety of functions that overlap those three primary areas of law.

We all had our separate reasons for aspiring to become a trial court judge. For most of us, it is a way to serve our community, to provide help to those who are in crisis and it is also a means to give back to the legal profession. Again, for most of us, serving as a judge is a calling and is rewarding beyond measure.

The work is also incredibly difficult and stressful. Most judges sit in court a good part of each day hearing and ruling on one case after another, and sometimes the judge is occupied by extended evidentiary hearings or trials involving complicated facts and legal issues. Many of these cases are contentious, hard to listen to and difficult to understand the motivations of



the parties. For example, a judge might spend hours arraigning criminal defendants or performing sentencing decisions involving morally deviant or cruel fact patterns. A civil judge might regularly hear domestic cases where parents, who share a mutual animosity toward each other, are fighting over their children. Juvenile judges regularly hear cases involving shocking forms of child abuse and neglect. An inordinate percentage of these cases have an overlay of drug addiction and abuse. None of this is pleasant; judges never get used to it; much of what we hear is painful and takes a terrific toll on all of us.

The Oregon Judicial Department needs help from the Legislature to perform its vital societal role of protecting the public, especially our children and our most helpless and vulnerable citizens, and enforcing the Rule of Law. Without additional funding, as our Chief Justice has so eloquently explained, I am concerned that our battle to improve public safety and civility is a losing one. This struggle was once exclusively fought in adversarial courtroom proceedings; however, we have since realized in more recent years that fighting these battles in treatment settings, like drug courts, community family courts and mental health courts, dramatically improves our chances of saving lives and salvaging others from the scrap heap of incarceration.

Courts around the state need additional judicial resources to establish treatment courts and to timely and efficiently process the ever-increasing workloads that our courts are faced with. For example, here in Jackson County we have a drug court, a mental health court and a community family court, but to administer those essential components to our court, criminal and juvenile judges are performing critical administrative and oversight responsibilities at the expense of their primary dockets. This causes backlogs, inordinately long sessions, unreasonable delays, dissatisfaction, disillusionment and denials of access to justice.

Courts are also in need of additional funding to increase judicial compensation. I am sure you are well aware by now of the woefully low compensation Oregon trial court judges and appellate court judges receive. Sure, we all would like to make more money, but as far as I am concerned,

this is not about the current cadre of Oregon judges (at age 70, it's frankly too late for me anyway); it's about the vital importance of recruiting the best, the brightest and most experienced lawyers in Oregon to become judges. Far too little is said about the crisis that exists in Oregon in terms of the lack of judges who have a significant background in civil law or civil trial practice. It is hard to persuade an experienced civil trial lawyer to run for election to become a judge if she or he is already making up to twice the salary of a judge. We need to make judicial salaries more competitive and attractive to those committed lawyers who are willing to give back to their community.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy C. Gerking', written in a cursive style.

Hon. Timothy C. Gerking  
Presiding Judge  
Jackson County Circuit Court

cc: Tina Qualls, Trial Court Administrator, Jackson County Circuit Court  
Phillip Lemman, Acting Deputy State Court Administrator



City of Medford

# Medford Police Department

*Your Police – Our Community*

Patrol Lieutenant

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March 19, 2019

Mike Budreau  
Medford Police Department  
Patrol Lieutenant  
Medford, OR 97501

To whom it may concern,

As a Medford Police Officer for 25 years, I would like to share my experiences with our Jackson County Treatment Courts. The harsh reality of police work in Jackson County is that we deal with the same group of criminals over and over. The far majority of criminals we arrest are either motivated by drug addiction or it is a contributing factor. Even though our local criminals can accumulate quite a list of charges over the months or years they are engaging in addiction and criminal activity, they seldom see any real jail time. The process repeats itself until someone or something breaks that cycle.

Jackson County Treatment Courts have been the one thing I have seen break this cycle, often times for good. Offenders that we used to arrest several times a year are now contributing members of society. Getting just one person clean and off of drugs can make a difference in crime in our community. Getting a handful, or even dozens of offenders on the right path, can have a dramatic effect on crime in our valley.

We have a great working relationship with our Jackson County Treatment Courts, the main reason being that their programs really work.

Mike Budreau  
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