



April 4th, 2019

To: Co-Chairs of the Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee:
The Honorable Jackie Winters, The Honorable Carla Piluso

From: Gail Bartley, Program Manager – Mary’s Place & Courthouse Advocacy Programs of
Saving Grace – Imagine Life Without Violence, Bend OR

Re: Additional Judges for Deschutes County Circuit Court

I am the manager of Mary’s Place Supervised Visitation & Safe Exchange Center in Bend, Oregon, which is a program of Saving Grace – the domestic violence and sexual assault non-profit serving Central Oregon for over 40 years. Mary’s Place provides supervised visitation and safe exchanges for families impacted by domestic violence where there are safety issues for adult victims and children related to parenting time.

I also manage a program which houses a bi-lingual (Spanish) Saving Grace legal advocate at the Deschutes County Courthouse to assist victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking with filing protective orders, safety planning, and help in navigating the court system.

Since moving to Bend in 1998, I have been involved in advocacy work for victims of crime, including volunteering with the District Attorney’s office victim advocate program and as a Saving Grace hotline volunteer before becoming a staff member in 2006 when Mary’s Place opened for services.

During over 20 years of experience in working with victims in Deschutes County, I have learned that the Deschutes County Circuit Court plays a critical role in our community’s coordinated community response to domestic violence. At Saving Grace, we deeply appreciate the quality, professionalism and commitment to justice and victim safety demonstrated by the judges of the Deschutes County Circuit Court.

The numbers of domestic violence-involved criminal and civil matters (including protective orders and custody) which come before our bench are significant and have only increased as our local population continues to explode. In domestic violence and sexual assault matters, the timeliness in which cases can be addressed is critical to the safety outcomes for victims. While our judges do their best to prioritize high-risk cases and to resolve matters as quickly as they can, the demands they face far outpace their capacity.

I speak for my organization – Saving Grace - as well as for myself personally in urging the committee to prioritize additional judges for Deschutes County. Not only on behalf of timely justice for victims, but for as well for those charged with crimes and for the safety and well-being of our entire community.