



LatinoNetwork

**Testimony of Ricardo Lujan-Valerio, Director of Advocacy
In Support of HB 4004 – Public Defense Funding and Reform
House Committee on Judiciary
February 3rd, 2017**

Chair Sanchez and Members of the Committee,

Latino Network strongly supports HB 4004, which seeks to further assist the Office of Public Defense Services in adequately funding public defense and moving forward with crucial reforms that will address Oregon's current flawed system.

The 2020 public defense bill is a good step to give certainty to Oregon's public defense contractors in what they can expect in contracting with the Office of Public Defense Services for the foreseeable future. It also sets us up for much needed conversations are broader reforms that were pointed out in the 2019 Sixth Amendment Center report [“The Right to Counsel in Oregon: Evaluation of Trial Level Public Defense Representation Provided Through the Office of Public Defense Services.”](#)

However, HB 4004 is only the first step towards a larger reform. It's a small step toward reforms by putting into statute the abolishment of the flat rate case contracting the Sixth Amendment Center called unconstitutional in the way it pitted a client's right to adequate representation against the attorney's financial need (not greed) to take on a higher caseloads than what is reasonable. In addition to abolishing the flat case rate contracts some highlights include:

- Considerations of costs accrued by contractors such as licensing, training, office space and other overhead costs
- Building caseload and workload models that take into regional needs and best practices into consideration
- Transparency and accountability for contractors and OPDS.

As a direct-service provider towards youth that are currently facing our state's criminal justice system, it is important to provide adequate legal representatives. It is the duty of the state to uphold its constitutional duty and provide. **We respectfully request that you support HB 4004.** Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions.



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