

Tracy A. Prall
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Third Judicial District
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February 10, 2020

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on General Government and Emergency Preparedness

Re: SB 1558 CourtCare Bill

Dear Chair Riley, Vice Chair Girod. and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of SB1558 CourtCare Bill. My comments in this letter reflect my personal opinion and are not to be construed as a position of the Oregon Judicial Department.

I currently serve as the presiding Judge for the Marion County Circuit Court. In that capacity I saw the profound impact CourtCare had on our court process. When CourtCare was in operation in Marion County there was a significant reduction in the number of children attending court hearings; hearings where their parents were fighting over custody or facing criminal charges. By providing court involved parents with a safe and appropriate place for their children to be cared for, they were better able to focus on the matter at hand and the children were spared from hearing about conflict within their families or the details of traumatic events.

The CourtCare program in Marion County also allows court involved parents to participate in court order services. More than half of the children attending the CourtCare program in Marion County were children of parents involved in our Fostering Attachment Treatment Court (FATC), a court for parents struggling with drug addiction. The parents in FATC dropped their children off at CourtCare not only when they came to court hearings but also when they attended treatment and counseling sessions. CourtCare was a vital component of their success.

It is my understanding, the Marion County CourtCare program served over 1,100 children before being suspended due to funding gaps in June 2019. The return on investment for this program has been tremendous.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy A. Prall', written in a cursive style.

Tracy A. Prall
Presiding Judge
Marion County Circuit Court