

Paul L Evans
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 4, 2020

Senate Committee on General Government and Emergency Preparedness
Oregon State Senate
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Riley, Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 1558 (SB 1558) extends the sunset of the CourtCare pilot programs in Marion and Polk Counties through January 2022. I ask for your support in passage of this important legislation with all deliberate speed.

CourtCare is a critical element of our ongoing efforts to provide the following outcomes: 1) greater stability for families navigating the criminal justice system; 2) enhanced opportunities for needs assessments of families often struggling to overcome structural and systemic barriers associated with involvement in the criminal justice system; and 3) enhanced intervention capacities for ensuring the safety and security of at-risk family members when warranted.

This program offers our state, community, and families direct and indirect “value.” Families have access to childcare during court proceedings; service providers have access to children enhancing the likelihood matching needs and available services. CourtCare providers become trusted “partners” alleviating at least some of the emotional burden involved with very stressful courtroom proceedings. The program shields children and in many ways improves the in-court proceedings. It builds trust between families and service providers; it has been shown to significantly improve long-term outcomes as well.

CourtCare has not been around in our community for long, but since 2017 over 3,000 children (and families) have been served. It has yielded tremendous benefit for all involved; it is a model that works – a model we should find the means to expand – statewide when feasible to do so. Few government programs live up to the expectations we seek: this one exceeds them. CourtCare is not the panacea, no program can resolve every problem, but it is a powerful community-based tool for improving the lives of thousands of our neighbors. It is desperately needed in our community.

In closing, I want to thank you for hearing this important measure. As a co-chief sponsor of this measure I want to thank the four co-chief sponsors Senator Boles, Representatives Alonso Leon, Moore-Green, and Piluso, and the many co-sponsors for making this bill a reality in 2020. It truly is a bicameral – bipartisan – effort. SB 1558 is sound policy reflecting the best intentions of all involved.

Respectfully,

CC: Senator Boles
Representative Alonso Leon
Representative Moore-Green
Representative Piluso