



Chair Riley, Vice-chair Girod, Members of the Committee:

Oregon AFSCME represents 27,000 workers statewide including folks who work at Polk County. Our members serve the county in many roles, from behavioral health counselors to county appraisers to the staff at the District Attorney's office. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB 1558 and urge the legislative body to continue supporting this important piece of our criminal justice system.

AFSCME Council 75 has been working intensely around reforms to our criminal justice system, particularly around public defense. We know that the most successful national models for reform look at impacts outside of defense including case work and other wrap around services. Court Care is a great example of a program that works to support those going through our legal system and has a major impact on families in the community.

Here is what I heard from one of my members who works in the court at Polk County.

"My experience has mostly been in the treatment court context, where participants usually have to attend weekly court sessions where the content is not child-friendly (conversations about addiction, mental health struggles including suicidal ideation, etc) and most of the participants are single parents with more than one child. So if court care is available, they can arrive early, drop the kids off and check them in, go to court and then pick up the kids afterward without having to procure childcare that they cannot afford. It's been a great service for these participants."

From the testimony you will hear today, it is clear to see the huge impact this has on had on the community and on those going through the process. We urge the legislature to continue funding this important resource.

Thank you.

Dan Torres
Political Coordinator
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