

Lori Stegmann
Multnomah County Commissioner
Representing East County, District 4



4/29/2021
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Bynum, Vice Chairs Noble and Power, and members of the Committee,

As the Multnomah County Commissioner representing East County, I'd like to highlight the extreme disparities my constituents experience compared to those just across 82nd Ave in the western part of our county. This spans beyond service and programmatic needs and includes transportation and infrastructure improvements that have long been neglected in our region. During my time in office, I have worked to develop partnerships and secure investments in East County to support our most vulnerable populations to bring our part of the region closer to par. There is still a long way to go.

When the East County Courthouse was built, it was intended to serve a growing population who had to travel to downtown Portland for their public safety needs. Since then, our East County population has surged to comprise more than 40% of the total population for our county. Issues facing our communities are more complex and disparities are prevalent for many residents in East County. As East County continues to grow, we must adjust our systems and infrastructure to accommodate that expansion.

The East County Courthouse is a much needed asset in our community but it is underutilized at a time when we need to maximize our resources to meet the growing demand. The current Oregon statute states that if a defendant has been in custody at any point during their interaction with the justice system, the current case is required to be heard at our downtown courthouse in Portland.

With the passage of SB 188, we can better serve our residents and allow those who have been released prior to their trial, the ability to have their hearing held closer to home and in their community. This allows us to fully utilize our facility and have the capacity to serve additional cases at the East County Courthouse. With this increase in the number of cases heard, we can receive the full benefit from a vital community asset, while at the same time relieving the overload of cases our downtown courthouse experiences. I urge your support for SB 188.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Stegmann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Commissioner Lori Stegmann, Multnomah County District 4