



METROPOLITAN PUBLIC DEFENDER MULTNOMAH COUNTY SECTION

May 9, 2021

Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee,
900 State Street NE, Room H-178
Salem OR 97301

Re: Support of HB 5030 - Insuring a Strong Investment in Public Defense Services

Dear Co-chair Gorsek, Co-Chair Sollman, and members of the subcommittee:

I am a career public defender with almost thirty years of experience in Multnomah County. I am also the wife of a public school teacher who has taught in Title I schools for his entire career.

I write to urge support for HB 5030 because I know that Oregon benefits from a strong investment in public defense services.

I speak from experience. I currently lead Metropolitan Public Defender's Parent|Child Advocacy Division. I supervise a team of dedicated lawyers and staff who work directly with children in the juvenile justice system and parents and children in dependency and termination of parental rights cases. I have years of experiences supervising attorneys handling serious criminal cases and have personally represented adults and children accused of serious felonies and murder.

On July 1, 2020, Multnomah County became a Parent Child Representation Program (PCRP) County. Since then, I have witnessed first-hand the benefits of this strong investment in Public Defense. Since then, my clients have benefited directly from their lawyer being a PCRP contract lawyer.

Because of my experiences under the old funding system and PCRP, I am well qualified to speak to the value of fully funding public defense at its current service level, as well as the value of funding for a strong investment in the future of public defense services. I support HB 5030, because I value my community, I value the preservation of families whenever possible and I value accused adults, accused youth and families having experienced, well-supported legal defense teams.

May 9, 2021

Page 2

I will never forget the words of praise and thanks from a parent client for our PCRCP funded case manager during court. The parent described how her defense team's case manager helped her into a shelter, so that she could shower, sleep and focus on services needed to help with the return of her children. My lawyers and I now have more time to build strong trusting relationships with young clients and distraught parent clients under the PCRCP funding/case cap model. This results in quicker and better decision making from our clients. HB 5030 will continue and expand the support and resources that court appointed attorneys need to do their work.

I have been the attorney appointed pre-petition on serious person felony cases because OPDS's PCRCP authorized and funded it. I have seen how pre-petition appointment in juvenile proceedings makes a difference. It protects parents and youth from government overreach. It increases the likelihood of efficient, constitutionally valid resolutions in dependency and delinquency matters. It prevents unnecessary removal of children or unnecessary detention of youth.

The future of indigent defense in Oregon must be adequately funded public defense services: Public defense services that ensure an interdisciplinary model of parent child representation across the state, public defense services that ensure reasonable caseloads across the state.

Research shows investment in quality well supported representation for children and parents significantly reduces the likelihood that an adjudicated youth will face a probation violation. It also results in children whose conditions or circumstances result in formal DHS involvement spending fewer months in foster care. This saves money long term. It strengthens our community. It improves the lives of children.

Investing in future improvements to public defense services as well as supporting the current service level of public defense services will allow the Public Defense Services Commission to face the challenges and transition from an outdated public defense delivery system to a strong efficient public defense oversight and delivery organization. Adequate funding will ensure a constitutionally and statutorily sound model of public defense for families, accused youth and accused adults.

Please support HB 5030. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Dawn Andrews

She/Her

Chief Assistant Public Defender

Multnomah Co. Parent|Child Advocacy Division

Metropolitan Public Defender