

PETE SANDROCK
Portland

February 24, 2023

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senator Kim Thatcher, Vice-Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 807 – blanket disqualifications of judges in criminal & juvenile cases

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Committee members:

DAs and public defenders have a professional obligation to occasionally remove a judge from some cases. In rare circumstances they also have an obligation to remove a judge from all criminal and juvenile cases using the so-called blanket disqualification. I support their right to do so.

But there's a problem. DAs and public defenders presently have **unilateral and unreviewable power to blanket disqualify** a judge and to do so without explaining their reasons.

I support SB 807 because it provides a reasonable check on unilateral power.

SB 807 provides **an option, not a mandate, for independent review** of blanket disqualifications. A review is triggered only if a judge asks for one after having been disqualified so many times as to effectively remove the judge from the criminal docket.

SB 807 isn't a Beach Bill, a Bottle Bill, or SB 100. It doesn't break new ground on a national scale. It simply **aligns Oregon with similar practices in most other states.**

Respectfully,

Pete Sandrock
Benton County District Attorney (1977-1999)
President, Oregon District Attorneys Association (1988)

cc:

Sen. Sara Gelser Blouin
Sen. Dennis Linthicum
Sen. James Manning, Jr.