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Sen. Floyd Prozanski
Sen.FloydProzanski@oregonlegislature.gov

Rep. Paul Evans
Rep.paulevans@oregonlegislature.gov

Rep. Kim Wallan
Rep.kimwallan@oregonlegislature.gov

Sen. Dennis Linthicum
Sen.DennisLinthicum@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: SB 337 and Criminal Defense Consortia

Dear Sen. Prozanski, Rep. Evans, Rep. Wallan, and Sen. Linthicum,

I have been an attorney in Oregon for nineteen and a half years. I have been on the Marion County Juvenile Consortium (MJAC) for nearly seventeen of those years. I am genuinely concerned about the direct impact that the potential amendments to SB 337 will have on MJAC, my law practice, the clients that we serve and the public defense system as a whole.

MJAC consists of fourteen attorneys who have FTE's between .5 and 1.0. We have high expectations for ourselves and for our colleagues. Even though we are frequently adversaries in the courtroom, we provide mentoring, training, support, and encouragement to one another outside of the courtroom. It is invaluable to have a group of attorneys that you can rely upon, learn from, and share in the triumphs of reunifying families. There are many intangible assets that being a member of a consortium can offer.

If the legislature passes SB 337, the MJAC will most likely no longer provide public defense services. I honestly do not know how many of us will contract directly with the State. Dealing with this administrative burden will likely deter many of us from continuing in the public defense realm and will strictly do private defense work.

I am confused as to why the legislature believes that getting rid of consortia is the correct path forward to solve the shortage of public defenders. In my humble opinion, it will most assuredly add to the crisis.

Sincerely,


Kathy Streed, Attorney at Law