

ANDREA BOUCHER P.C.

Attorney at Law

425 SW 2nd Ave Suite 103
P.O. Box 3280
Albany, Oregon 97321
Telephone: (541) 928-4503
Email: andreaboucherlaw@gmail.com

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Sen. Floyd Prozanski
Rep. Paul Evans
Rep. Kim Wallan
Sen. Dennis Linthicum

Re: Opposition to SB 337

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

I have been representing Juvenile Dependency and Delinquency clients in Linn County for the past 16 years under a consortium model. Throughout this time, we have had a very consistent group of consortium attorneys providing representation. It is important to recognize we represent all legal parties to a case, mothers, fathers, children and legal guardians. The qualifications standards to be a court appointed juvenile defense attorney are high and it can take years of experience to meet the standards. Above that, juvenile dependency and delinquency law is a unique area that is constantly evolving and growing. It is not an area of law one can effectively dabble in.

Our attorneys are passionate about this line of work and our consortium primarily consist of all 1.0 FTE positions. We all maintain our own law offices and individual space for meeting with clients. This is to avoid the natural conflicts which arise in dependency case, and sometimes with delinquency cases.

Due to the number of parties associated with cases, there are typically 3, if not 4 or more attorneys assigned to each case. We all have a different client who has their own interests and positions in the case. The consortium model is necessary in handling this work as we are able to manage legal conflicts amongst the parties. The proposed models of a public defender's office or a nonprofit law firm does not make practical sense in that no more than one attorney from any given office can be assigned to a case.

In my 16 years providing public defense work for dependency and delinquency clients, I have seen an increase in oversight by the state. Currently we report monthly to the state about the cases we are working on, the time spent in meetings, in court and providing other services to the clients. As a county, we meet monthly with our dependency Judges, ODHS, CASA, the CRB and other community providers to discuss goals to continuously improve the work we all do for the clients. As a consortium we meet monthly to discuss way to continue to improve, in fact for months now, we have been inviting different community partners, such as treatment providers, juvenile

department director, members of non profits, to join our monthly meetings to gain better understanding of what they offer our clients and how we can all continue to improve the systems for our clients. This kind of collaboration works because we all work together. We all share a common goal, and that is to provide excellent representation to our clients. We are a consortium, we are associates, we are partners in what we do, we have a united purpose. Together we are stronger than we are individually. If you take away the consortium model, you are weakening representation for families.

I strongly encourage you to think about the damage this will cause to an already struggling system.

Sincerely,

/s/ Andrea Boucher

Andrea Boucher

OSB#073422