



John D. Wentworth, Clackamas County District Attorney

807 Main Street, Oregon City, Oregon 97045
P: 503.655.8431 | F: 503.650.8943 | districtattorney@clackamas.us

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Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

As the elected District Attorney for Clackamas County, I am writing to express my concern regarding SB 337 and the -1 Amendment, which appear to result in the elimination of our consortia-based indigent defense service model in Clackamas County.

Clackamas County's indigent defense services are provided exclusively through a consortia, the Clackamas Indigent Defense Corporation (CIDC), rather than a "public defender" model. Having practiced in other parts of the state, I can assure you that this consortia of private attorneys are among the brightest and most diligent criminal defense attorneys in Oregon. When I have personally recommended attorneys to others, I draw from the pool of CIDC attorneys.

You are well aware of the reported challenges the public defense system is facing across Oregon. However, I think it is important to point out that the majority of unrepresented issues have occurred in counties that maintain a "public defender" model of service delivery such as Washington and Multnomah counties.¹

Fortunately, Clackamas County is different. To date, we still have not seen the crisis Washington and Multnomah Counties have experienced with their "public defense" model. I cannot pretend to know why the difference exists; I just know it does. And, that difference should be studied and perhaps modeled rather than being destroyed in favor of a failed service delivery model.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. If you have questions or wish to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John D. Wentworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end.

John D. Wentworth
District Attorney, Clackamas County

¹ As of today, there are 150 unrepresented defendants in Washington County, 428 unrepresented defendants in Multnomah County and zero in Clackamas County.