

Submitter: Sara Foroshani

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure: SB5506

Co-chairs Steiner & Sanchez; Vice-chairs Girod, Gomberg, & Smith; and Members of the Committee —

My name is Sara Foroshani. I am currently the Interim Executive Director of Multnomah Defenders Inc. I've also been a public defender in Oregon for nearly 10 years. I'm a Portland resident & a constituent of Co-Chair Representative Sanchez.

I attended the live forum at PCC in SW Portland but unfortunately was unable to provide live testimony due the timing constraints. I am now writing to ask you to support the Public Defense Budget and fund Oregon Public Defense Services's (OPDS) policy option packages (POPs).

To put this need in perspective, nearly my whole generation of public defenders have left the cause. This is namely due to low pay, high caseloads, and high stress. At MDI in the last three years, we have lost 25 attorneys. To highlight this destabilization, of that loss MDI lost nearly our whole felony team just a year ago in April 2022.

Again, I ask you to support the public defense budget and fund OPDS POPs so we can collectively stabilize and modernize the public defense workforce and help address the Constitutional crisis of unrepresented persons within the criminal legal system. Thank you for your time & consideration.

Sincerely,
Sara Foroshani