



Oregon

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January 21, 2025

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

Subject: Letter of Support for funding of Malheur County Courthouse planning

I am writing this letter in support of the Malheur County Circuit Court 9th Judicial District's request for funds to plan and develop a new Courthouse. The Oregon State Police employs approximately 30 sworn Troopers and Detectives in our Ontario Patrol Office. These Troopers and Detectives all cite multiple criminal cases into the Malheur County Circuit Court and therefore frequently receive subpoenas, for trials held at the Courthouse.

The current Malheur County Courthouse is outdated and over capacity. It lacks some very critical security features that are crucial to the safety of Judges, Support Staff, Jurors, Victims, Officers etc. One of the safety concerns is lack of secure witness rooms and jury assembly rooms and holding facilities which causes Jurors to be in the same public areas as Defendants, Victim's, and Attorney's they may be hearing at a Trial. It is not uncommon to have 5-6 Officers, multiple Attorneys, Defendants and Victims crammed into the hallway outside the court rooms trying to have private conversations prior to entering the courtroom.

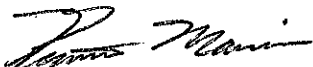
Another critical security measure that is missing is the ability to screen everyone coming into the court room due to the layout of the courthouse and all the other County offices that are housed in the building. This creates a critical safety risk to everyone inside the building. Having a newly designed courthouse with security checkpoints at a designated court room area with full staffing will grant the assurance of a safe trial or legal process.

The current Courthouse only contains 2 court rooms but only 1 can support a full jury trial. The current need supports 3 fully functional courtrooms. The shortage of available court rooms prevents the courts from scheduling multiple jury trials at a time. Which causes a ripple effect of all the agencies involved including the Oregon State Police. This shortage frequently causes trials to be rescheduled to another date. Cases are frequently rescheduled multiple times before they can be held at trial. This creates constant issues with scheduling and overtime for the Oregon State Police.

Malheur County is situated on the Border of Idaho and Ontario is Malheur County's largest city. Idaho is seeing rapid growth on their side of the border and many of those Idaho citizens travel to Ontario to conduct business daily. It is not uncommon for the population of Ontario to double during daytime hours. This huge influx of people in turn creates more calls for service for Law Enforcement and results in more criminal cases being cited into Malheur County Circuit Court.

I believe that a new designed Courthouse is critical to be able to not only handle the current court demands more efficiently but to also handle the continued increase of court demands that come with more population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt Marvin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

Kurt Marvin, Lieutenant
Oregon State Police