



# LANE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

**SENT BY EMAIL TO [Sen.FloydProzanski@OregonLegislature.gov](mailto:Sen.FloydProzanski@OregonLegislature.gov)**

February 6, 2025

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski  
Chair of Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee  
State Senator • District 4 (Springfield & Eugene)  
900 Court St. NE S-413  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Prozanski & Senate Judiciary Committee Members:

I am the President of the Lane County Bar Association (LCBA) writing on behalf of our ten(10) member Board of Directors. Our 85-year association consists of licensed attorneys members here in Lane County. Our attorney members maintain regular ongoing court appearances at the Lane County Circuit Court (LCCC) in Eugene, on behalf of our clients in the community.

I respectfully request your support for two(2) new judicial officers for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, as submitted for your consideration by [Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice Meagan Flynn](#).

For 40 years, the Lane County Circuit Court has been limited to an allocation of 15 judges, which remains unchanged. It is beyond time to adjust this number to reflect both: (1) population growth in our community and (2) radical changes in the nature of work our court performs, over the past four decades.

Funding additional judges will provide a long overdue solution to a systemic problem, one reaching genuine critical mass. The Lane County justice system needs relief. Currently, our judges work at a pace that is simply unsustainable. Despite their best human efforts—applying all the mental & physical faculties they can for public good—Lane County judges face serious challenges keeping pace with the enormous and increasingly complex caseload they face daily. This challenge makes it impossible for judges to provide community members—our clients—the time required to make their case and to experience the access to justice they deserve. Having the same number of judges in 2025 as we did in 1985 means EVERY hearing must occur under the shadow of time constraints. As attorneys, we are left with clients who feel rushed, unfairly treated...even the sting of injustice....all from judges doing the best they can with what they have.

Funding additional judges in Lane County is a notably wise investment.

New judges would enable our local court to simply enhance its statewide reputation as amongst—and in some ways THE most—innovative & efficient justice systems in Oregon and beyond. For example, Lane County Circuit Court pioneered substance abuse treatment court (*aka* Drug Court) in the United States. We have specialty courts for veterans, juveniles, and the

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mentally ill. For the enormous number of local cases where people are representing themselves, our court offers judicially-led status conference dockets dedicated to help litigants navigate the court system without an attorney.

We are very proud to have local judges who are national, state and local leaders in juvenile, criminal and family law. It is this field-tested expertise that equips them to create innovative programs that address our community's problems in a practical way.

Without the Judiciary Committee's investment to help right size the Lane County Circuit Court bench, our judges will be forced to continue facing the public disintegration of our local justice system. These judges will eventually not be able to do their current duties, let alone add innovation to their daily grind.

Separately, Lane County judges and attorneys understand that finding consensus and building relationships across groups with conflicting interests is crucial to solving real community problems. However, this requires judges to offer their leadership "outside the courthouse", in addition to an already unsustainable workload. Despite this limitation, we have seen Lane County Circuit Court judges nonetheless sacrifice of themselves to lead in this way.

For example, consider what our judges accomplished—together with local attorneys—to stave off the worst of criminal defense crisis in recent years. It was a proverbial clutch moment and together—with judicial leadership—we passed the test.

The foregoing should eliminate any doubt that investing in new judges for the Lane County Circuit Court will pay off in ways unique to our locale. New judges would enter into the innovative culture of public service I have described. The attorney members of our association appear in a variety of courts statewide. We are incredibly grateful to have this special judicial culture in our locale.

Thank you for considering this request for two(2) new judges. The entire LCBA membership and the community we serve eagerly await your decision. We entrust to you our call for the help the Lane County Circuit Court requires to maintain current service levels and be positioned to apply innovation to address issues related to the housing crisis and mental & behavioral health challenges in our community.

Respectfully submitted,



Mr. Jino Hwang  
President

*Lane County Bar Association*

JHW/ms  
Cc: LCBA Archives