



Presiding Judge Kathleen E. Johnson  
(541) 957-2433  
(541) 957-2445 (fax)

[www.courts.oregon.gov/courts/douglas](http://www.courts.oregon.gov/courts/douglas)

Email: [dou.court@ojd.state.or.us](mailto:dou.court@ojd.state.or.us)

Douglas County Circuit Court  
16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District  
1036 SE Douglas Ave, Room 201  
Roseburg, OR 97470

February 24, 2025

To: The Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 95

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your time considering Senate Bill 95. My apologies for not attending in person, but the reality is that the reason for my inability to attend illustrates the very point that I wish to convey. On the afternoon of this hearing, between 2:30 and 5:00 in the afternoon, I will be calling 64 cases in my courtroom. Out of necessity, the hearings will be shorter than is ideal for the fair and efficient processing of cases.

Oregon Judicial Branch's Judicial Workload Study shows that Douglas County needs three additional judges. What that means is that each of our six judges (five elected and one referee) is doing the work of 1.5 judges. Our workload causes our Court to have a great deal of difficulty setting hearings and trials without delay. This is a great disservice to the public that we serve, and brings to mind the maxim "justice delayed is justice denied."

Civil filings in Douglas County have grown 56% in the last two years. We have over 350 criminal cases pending beyond our time standards for resolving cases, primarily because of the lack of defense attorneys. This caseload creates a great deal of additional work for both staff and judges in managing and monitoring the cases and the defendants. The District Attorney's office is currently understaffed, and as the District Attorney hires new prosecutors and begins to work on their backlog, I anticipate the problem becoming much worse.

While we understand that other jurisdictions also need judges, and that there are many competing interests for funding, we simply ask you to consider that Douglas County has not had a new judge in over four decades, despite the need having been recognized and brought to the legislature since at least 1997. Please consider improving access to justice for the residents of Douglas County, and others who use our Courts.

Respectfully,

Kathleen Johnson  
Presiding Judge