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Support for HB 5012

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
Submitted by Annie Herz, Executive Director
Feb 27, 2025

Sponsors, Inc., is a national leader in the delivery of prisoner reentry services, operating in Lane County. We offer a broad range of services—case management, employment assistance, housing, cognitive behavioral therapy, mental health services and mentoring—that people need in order to be successful upon returning to their community. We write in support of HB 5012, the Oregon Judicial Department agency budget, which includes several critical investments for Oregonians.

Sponsors, specifically, wants to call attention to three crucial investments being proposed by the Oregon Judicial Department. These “policy option packages” (POPs) would provide much needed supports for people navigating the state’s court systems and pre-trial release programs.

POP 102 – a \$33.3M allocation for *Judicial Compensation*. Ensuring that quality, committed individuals remain attracted to serving as judges in our state court system is of utmost priority for ensuring integrity in our courts. Right now, Judicial salaries are not competitive causing experienced judges to leave the bench, while recruiting skilled judges is difficult.

POP 106 – a \$2,481,183 allocation for *continued funding for the unrepresented defendants crisis*. The number of unrepresented individuals has reached new record highs, and on November 1, 2024, there were 3,832 such individuals in Oregon. Ongoing investment is necessary if we want to see a reduction in this problematic caseload.

POP 114 – a \$4,155,457 allocation for *Pretrial Program Investigation, Interview, Monitoring*. This request builds on OJD’s work to build pretrial programs statewide. OJD created pretrial programs in every judicial district, deployed a statewide case management system and deployed data standards, established annual trainings, and is developing an Oregon-specific risk assessment tool in partnership with the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC).

These investments at the Oregon Judicial Department build on good work done in previous legislative sessions, prioritizing these for continued funding is imperative to bring our stability to our state’s judicial system.

I hope you’ll join Sponsors, Inc. in your support for HB 5012.