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Traci Conner, Legal Assistant

March 25, 2019

The Honorable Jackie Winters
The Honorable Carla Piluso
Co-chairs, Public Safety Subcommittee

Re: SB 5513, Oregon Judicial Department budget

Dear Senator Winters and Representative Piluso:

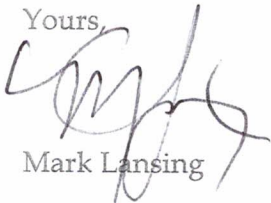
I write to you to express my support for as much funding as possible for the Oregon Judicial Department. I suspect you are well aware of the role of courts in the criminal justice system, but as a civil litigator wanted to share how lack of proper court funding can adversely affect my clients in the civil arena. For example, because criminal cases involve speedy trial rights, civil cases get bumped to the back of the bus. Several years ago I had a jury trial that was postponed no less than 5 times because there was not a judge available to hear my client's case - the judges were all tied up with a criminal case backlog.

As the saying goes, justice delayed is justice denied. While court personnel and attorneys are accustomed to trial postponements, the citizens involved in civil disputes become particularly stressed (both monetarily and emotionally) when a case drags on.

Another place I have seen delays is at the appellate courts in Salem. I once had a case where we successfully sued for pregnancy discrimination, but when it went up on appeal, there was over 5 years needed to process the appeal, so that by the time we received an appellate ruling, the son my client was pregnant with at the time of the discrimination turned 8 years old on the day we received the favorable ruling out of Salem. When I first started practicing law 30 years ago, the advance sheets that report appellate opinions were about 50/50 criminal v. civil cases. Now it is closer to 90% criminal cases, which obviously creates problems for the smooth processing of civil appeals.

Thank you for considering this.

Yours,



Mark Lansing

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