



February 3, 2020

Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger, and members of the committee,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to share the Oregon Defense Consortia Association's support of HB 4004. The Oregon Defense Consortia Association includes public defense providers who work with consortia in Baker, Clackamas, Clatsop, Coos, Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Jackson, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Union, Willamette, and Washington counties. Our members are committed to public defense work and support efforts to improve our public defense system.

We thank Speaker Kotek for her leadership on this bill and for leading the effort to reform the public defense system this session. We appreciate her bringing stakeholders together to craft a bill that will provide stability in the short term and will establish a foundation for further reforms in the 2021 session.

ODCA is grateful for the inclusion of provisions that direct the PDSC to adopt policies that ensure compensation and caseloads are in accordance with national and regional best practices, which we hope will bring some stability and certainty to our providers who have long worked with high caseloads, a lack of resources, and low pay. We also appreciate the provision which directs the Public Defense Services Commission to consider the different regional and structural needs of providers in its contracting policies. Finally, we support the direction to the Public Defense Services Commission to establish systems with transparency and stakeholder engagement, as this will be a crucial part of the reform effort moving forward.

We are grateful to the legislature for helping improve the public defense system for our providers, investigators, staff, and most importantly, our clients. We urge you to pass HB 4004 and lay this important foundation for reform, and we look forward to continuing the conversation and participating in the reform effort through the interim and into the 2021 session.

Oregon Defense Consortia Association

Sincerely,

Jon Weiner, President
Rob Harris, Vice President
Bruce Liebowitz, Treasurer
Jon Pritchard, Board Member
Cierra Brown, Board Member