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**CIRCUIT COURT FOR DOUGLAS COUNTY**  
**Sixteenth Judicial District**

January 29, 2020

Judiciary Committee  
House of Representatives  
State of Oregon  
Salem, Oregon

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

As Presiding Judge of Sixteenth Judicial, Douglas County. I wish to convey our Judicial District's strong support of House Bill 4040. A Family Treatment Court in our county could serve many of the families in currently in dependency court in Douglas County providing wrap-around care for parents attempting to recover with children at risk due to substance abuse and addiction at home. These services will be supported with intensive judicial involvement and oversight of their case by our experienced juvenile judges and staff, and we are prepared to make that investment with your support.

***Needs in Our Judicial District***

In our county the number of addiction-affected justice system participants has reached crisis levels. There is an acute need for unique, appropriately tailored responses to those parents who, due to addiction, risk having their children removed and potentially parental rights terminated. In our county, over 500 children are in dependency court, with over 300 of those children in substitute care. Most of those children come from families with parents suffering from substance abuse problems. This morning I had a hearing about a small boy who had been removed from his mother for the third time because of the mother's repeated abuse of methamphetamine. These treatment courts are essential to break barriers for parents such as this mother who are not able, without great assistance, to quit using this highly addictive drug.

***A Better Response for Families Struggling with Substance Abuse Disorder***

These family treatment courts are designed to get to families before they get involved in the criminal justice system. These courts operate to approach the issues of neglect and abuse of children system from a different perspective than criminal-law drug courts. The Family Treatment Court model provides a meaningful alternative to the traditional case management in child welfare cases. Family Treatment Courts are for parents who require treatment for a substance abuse disorder and who are involved with the child welfare system because of alleged child abuse or neglect. This specialty court program combines intensive judicial monitoring with multidisciplinary interventions. By offering treatment, accountability, and supportive opportunities for safe reunification, these programs decrease the number of children removed from parents and the amount of time children are in foster care and reduce trauma to both parent and child.

The hallmarks of Family Treatment Courts are based on collaboration and accountability. Parents engaged in Family Treatment Courts will have all of the treatment providers associated with their case

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working together to treat the challenges the families face through weekly case management meetings with stakeholders. Parents will have their services tailored to individual needs and family circumstances. The Family Treatment Court builds upon the best qualities of each piece of the system through a model founded upon communication, community effort, and creative problem-solving.

Another important component of Family Treatment Courts is frequent case management meetings and check-ins with the judge overseeing the case. No longer will a family wait weeks or longer to voice a barrier they face because they will receive weekly, continuous support and feedback. For a child who is in foster care, or a parent whose child is in foster care, every day counts.

***Healing Parents, Protecting Kids***

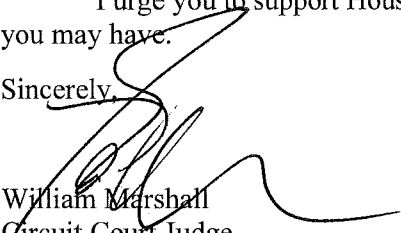
Our efforts will be to solve issues which cause children to be removed from parents and families. By these efforts, parents and children become more productive as families and less of a burden to society.

Family Treatment Courts deliver measurable, positive results. Children are less likely to be placed in foster care, parents are more likely to be successful in treatment, and the promise of recovery is real.

We have spoken with the treatment providers, child welfare advocates, and law enforcement, in Douglas County and we are united in our support of this bill. I am confident that an investment in our county will yield positive results for families, which in turn, yields results in the strength and well-being of our community.

I urge you to support House Bill 4040. I thank you for your consideration and welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



William Marshall  
Circuit Court Judge  
Douglas County  
Presiding Judge of Sixteenth Judicial Department