



Carla C. Piluso
State Representative, House District 50
900 Court St. NE, H-491, Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1450
rep.carlapiluso@oregonlegislature.gov

February 11, 2020

RE: Senate Bill 1558

Chair Riley and members of the committee:

For the record my name is Carla Piluso and I proudly represent House District 50, the great city of Gresham. I'm here today in support of SB 1558, which continues the CourtCare program in Polk and Marion Counties.

CourtCare provides free, high-quality childcare to parents who are taking care of business at court. I think of CourtCare as a win-win-win: It's good for kids, because it spares them from witnessing adult conflict and traumatizing scenes in court. It's good for parents, because it provides sorely needed one-time childcare and makes it easier for them to get to court appointments. And it's good for courts, because it removes the disruption of children in court and makes the whole process run smoother.

I first saw CourtCare in action decades ago in Multnomah County when I was a police officer. Multnomah County has been funding its CourtCare program through private donations for years. But those types of resources are not available to most counties—and for decades, our program was the only one in Oregon.

In 2017, the Legislature took a step towards expanding CourtCare by and funded pilot programs in Polk County and Marion County. You'll hear testimony today about how the state's investment has paid off since then—for parents, kids, judges, lawyers, and courts.

But last year, we failed to continue that investment. My bill to expand the CourtCare pilot, HB 2244-A, did not make it through the Ways & Means process—and both the Polk and Marion County programs abruptly lost funding.

These two programs have had major success responding to a serious need in their communities. They put in the legwork to get local buy-in, and they met the Legislature's requirements: providing high-quality care, collecting program data, and raising significant local matching funds.

We know that two things are true across our state: that there is a serious need for affordable childcare, and that our courts are severely overburdened by everything we ask them to do. CourtCare makes our justice system more accessible to working families. I urge your support for SB 1558.

Sincerely,

Carla C. Piluso
Oregon State Representative, House District 50