

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2003
BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
MARCH 18, 2021**

**PRESENTED BY: ERIN M. PETTIGREW, ACCESS TO JUSTICE COUNSEL FOR
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT**

Chair Bynum, Vice Chairs Noble and Power, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Erin M. Pettigrew, Access to Justice Counsel for the Oregon Judicial Department. On behalf of Oregon's state courts, I am here to testify in support of HB 2003, and I am so happy to join you on Gideon's Day, National Public Defense Services Day.

We thank Vice-Chair Power and the proponents for bringing this bill forward because the quality of defense services is a core justice system issue. And we appreciate the renewed interest in improvements to the criminal defense services that Oregonians receive, interest we are seeing from across the Oregon Legislature.

Section 1 of the bill expands the composition of the PDSC. We did want the committee to know that those positions, which are appointed by the Chief Justice, require appointed commission members to dedicate – on a volunteer basis – a considerable amount of time. Historically, the time commitment has been well over 10 hours each month, usually comprised of reading complex materials, travel time, and monthly four-hour meetings. Finding people willing and able to dedicate this amount of time to the work of the Commission has, at times, been a challenge.

We would appreciate the collaboration and support of those in the executive and legislative branches in identifying outstanding and qualified candidates for these critical leadership positions.

Again, we thank those behind this bill.