



## Oregon Judicial Department

TWENTY-FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Robert S. Raschio, Presiding Judge

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March 19, 2021

Honorable Members of the Legislature:

I am the Presiding Judge of Judicial District 24 serving Grant and Harney Counties. I write to convey our Judicial District's strong support of House Bill 3366. A Family Treatment Court in our county could serve over 50 families in the judicial district providing wrap-around care for parents on the road to recovery and 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.

### ***The Need in Our Judicial District***

In our counties, the number of addiction-affected justice system participants has reached new levels of crisis. There is an acute need for unique and appropriately tailored responses to those parents who, due to addiction, risk having their parental rights terminated. Most families who are in the dependency system are touched by addiction and mental health issues.

Currently, there are too many kids who do not have permanency because, in frontier counties, we struggle to get services to parents effectively and quickly. Family Treatment Court will serve to focus treatment providers, Department of Human Services case workers and the court on assessing

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Tammy Wheeler, Trial Court Administrator

family needs, developing a comprehensive treatment plan, implementing the plan and identifying family strengths, mentors and community services. Resources designed to stabilize families, disrupt generational addiction and create permanency and safety for children.

### ***A Different Response for Families Struggling with Substance Abuse Disorder***

As an attorney, I spent 19 years representing indigent clients involved in criminal activity and families (parents and children) in dependency matters. I represented people in a Family Treatment Court in the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in The Dalles as well as in the Drug Court prior to coming to the bench.

The Family Treatment Court model is very successful in interdiction in substance abuse and mental health issues that create a risk of serious harm to children.

Family Treatment Courts are for parents, who require treatment for a substance abuse disorder and co-occurring mental health issues, are involved with the child welfare system because of alleged child abuse or neglect, much of which can be traced back to substance abuse. 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 amount of time children are in foster care and reduce trauma to both parent and child.

Family Treatment Courts are trauma informed and focus all team members on the effect of trauma on the family. The court provides a place to address and reduce the traumatic impact of separation and the generational trauma inherent in so many of the families involved in the court system.

The hallmarks of Family Treatment Courts are collaboration and accountability. Parents engaged in Family Treatment Courts will have all of the treatment providers associated with their case working together to holistically treat the challenges the families are facing through weekly case

management meetings with all stakeholders present. Parents will have their services tailored to their 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 the frequency of case management meetings and check-ins with the judge overseeing the case. No longer will a family have to wait weeks or longer to voice a barrier they are facing because they will receive weekly, continuous support and feedback. No time is wasted.

For a child who is in foster care, or a parent whose child is in foster care, every day counts and Family Treatment Court honors that reality.

### ***Delivering Results, Healing Parents, Protecting Kids***

In the 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, with the passage of Measure 110, we need real solutions to the serious public health crisis of substance abuse. Our communities are in crisis due to methamphetamine and opioid addiction. Intervention with young families is a perfect model for the State of Oregon, through its court system, to be an important contributor in addressing this profound public health crisis.

Family Treatment Courts deliver measurable, positive results. Children are less likely to be placed in foster care or come out of the foster care system faster. Parents are more likely to be successful in treatment. The promise of recovery and the impact on generational addiction is real.

My court and I have spoken with the treatment providers, community partners and child welfare advocates in our county including Symmetry Care in Burns, Community Counseling Solutions in John Day, Great Oregon Behavioral Health, our regional provider, Grant-Harney Court Appointed Special Advocates, members of the Public Defense and Prosecution Bar, Oregon Department of Justice Attorneys, commissioners from our county courts and the Department of Human Services, Services to Children and Families, among others, and we are united in our support of



this bill and excited about the positive impact we can have on the lives of our children.

All of the treatment providers, DHS and many of the community partners listed have agreed to be part of a steering committee focusing on the development of the most effective Family Treatment Court we can create because our communities are committed to health of our families and know a focus on parental mental health and substance abuse addiction is a true and effective focus on the needs of our children.

I am confident an investment in our counties will yield positive results for families, which in turn, strengthens our communities.

I am extremely grateful for the strong support of the 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District's representatives, Senator Lynn Findley and Representative Mark Owens. Their leadership here recognizes the need to address the addiction crisis in rural Oregon communities and how important this bill is to achieve an effective response the public health crisis of substance abuse.

I urge you to support House Bill 3366. I thank you for your consideration and welcome and will respond promptly to any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Raschio", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert S. Raschio  
Presiding Circuit Court Judge  
24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District