



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 100-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

May 10, 2021

To: [Senator Chris Gorsek](#), Co-Chair
[Representative Janeen Sollman](#), Co-Chair
[Joint Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee](#)

Re: **HB 5030** Public Defense Services Consortium – **Support**


The League believes that the State of Oregon should provide access to its courts that meets the diverse needs of all people who use state courts. The League also believes in funding mandated programs or procedures for the state courts. The appointment of Public Defense Attorneys for indigent persons in criminal or juvenile court cases is a required court procedure and should be adequately funded.


The Sixth Amendment Center report in 2018 recommended a new model for payment of legal representation, but legislation in 2019 failed to provide funds for caseload adjustments. Those who work within the legal system recognize that court appointed attorneys are underpaid and overworked. Too many cases with too little preparation time can lead to poor representation and burnout of appointed attorneys. This situation needs to be ameliorated.

Justice demands equal representation from privately financed and public appointed attorneys. Indigent applicants themselves may be victims of domestic violence or property crimes or may not have had educational or vocational opportunities to provide for a higher income level. Many applicants may be persons of color, residents with limited English language skills, or homeless without a stable address. Accommodations are needed to provide legal assistance.

Court appointed attorneys deserve adequate reimbursement to manage difficult circumstances and to provide consistent representation. The state should provide the financial incentive for court appointed attorneys to work within the system for the benefit of the public. The League recommends the increased financial support for Public Defense Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.


Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President


Karen Nibler,
Public Safety Portfolio