



Megan L. Jacquot
Judge

**CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON
Fifteenth Judicial District**

Coos County Courthouse
Coquille, OR 97423
541-396-4115

**TESTIMONY ON HB 5030
BEFORE WAYS AND MEANS PUBLIC SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE
5/10/2021**

**PRESENTED BY: JUDGE MEGAN JACQUOT, JUDGE, COOS AND CURRY COUNTY
CIRCUIT COURTS
OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT**

Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sollman, and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Megan Jacquot, and I am a judge in Coos and Curry County Circuit Courts. I am speaking here today both for myself and the Oregon Judicial Department in support of House Bill 5030, the budget bill for the Public Defense Services Commission. Before I was elected to the bench, I was a public defender, and then a regular attorney contractor in Coos County and the Court of Appeals and a conflict attorney in Curry, Douglas, and Josephine Counties. In all those capacities, I worked closely with OPDS and have personally seen the value of investing in quality public defense services and the detriment to the entire justice system when this component isn't adequately funded.

I wanted to speak to you today about the value of public defense offered in juvenile cases through the Parent Child Representation Program (PCRP). This program, modeled after the successful Parent Representation Program in Washington state and now available in 10 Oregon jurisdictions, ensures that parents and children in dependency cases get adequate representation. This is accomplished by capping attorney caseloads, making social workers available to assist with the most challenging cases, providing regular training for attorneys and social workers, and by consistently measuring case outputs and outcomes. Some of the key benefits include reduced foster care placements; preservation of families whenever possible; expedited permanency, and stronger representation equality. Oregon data show, for our PCRP counties, the positive outcomes:

Dependency:

- Case resolution times speed up
- Less time spent in foster care for kids
- Families more likely to achieve permanency within 12 months of removal

Delinquency:

- Youth in delinquency proceedings in PCRP counties are less likely to violate probation conditions.

This program has been yielding better outcomes across Oregon and should be made available in as many counties as possible, as soon as possible. In my jurisdiction, the PCRP program is available in Coos County, but not in Curry County, and the difference is clear.

We desperately need to see this program expanded so that all families in Oregon can get the kind of representation that allows them to exit the child welfare system as quickly as possible, with confidence that they will not return. Just this morning, I was able to dismiss a case before the jurisdictional trial with confidence, because the PCRCP attorney involved was able to travel to Sweet Home to visit a child who was removed from Mother and successfully placed with the previously uninvolved Father. The attorney assured me that she had seen the home and met the extended family, ensured that child was comfortable and had what he needed and that there were no further safety risks to the child.

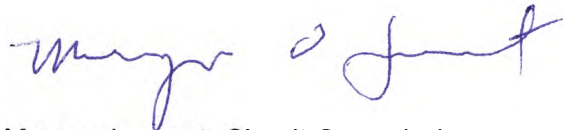
PCRCP attorneys often have an impact at the front end of the case, and are able to arrange in-home service and supervision plans that will keep the child safe in the home with their parents while the DHS investigation is pending and after jurisdiction if that becomes necessary.

Our delinquency attorneys have gone through extra training and have done a wonderful job of staying available for their clients who are committed to the Oregon Youth Authority for treatment. This practice has averted a number of bad decisions our youth could have made. We have significantly fewer commitments to the State training school as a result.

I was involved in the juvenile system before PCRCP, and after it was instituted in Coos County. The difference that the case caps and social service assistance have had with the same attorneys has been remarkable. Placing value on quality service will have long-term impacts that ripple through generations of Coos County families. I urge you to expand this model so that all Oregon families may benefit.

Thank you for considering my comments. I am available if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



Megan Jacquot, Circuit Court Judge