

**TESTIMONY ON SB 188
BEFORE THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 25, 2021**

**PRESENTED BY: THE HONORABLE STEPHEN BUSHONG, PRESIDING JUDGE
OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT**

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stephen Bushong, and I am the Presiding Judge for the Multnomah County Circuit Court. I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the Oregon Judicial Department in support of SB 188.

SB 188 amends ORS 3.014 to permit certain persons charged with a misdemeanor traffic offense to have their case tried at the East County Courthouse in Gresham.

Through our strategic campaign, the Judicial Department is working to improve access to justice by eliminating barriers and enhancing service options. SB 188 aligns with those objectives as it provides greater flexibility in determining what cases can be heard at the East County Courthouse. The current statute forces cases to be permanently transferred to the courthouse in downtown Portland if the person has a warrant or is taken into custody at any point in the case. This has resulted in fewer cases being eligible to be tried at the East County Courthouse and placed a burden on those that live in the East County to travel to downtown Portland to resolve their case. This measure will help us better tailor our resources to fit the needs of our growing East County community.

We have appreciated the opportunity to work collaboratively with Multnomah County, our district attorney's office, and local public defenders to craft a bill that allows members of our community better access to court services and facilities. As part of those discussions, we have identified the need for an amendment to provide that the provisions of the bill also apply to violation cases. We look forward to continuing to work with our justice system partners on this.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if there are any questions. Thank you for your time today.