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**TO: House Committee on Judiciary**  
**FROM: Mae Lee Browning, Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association**  
**DATE: February 11, 2022**  
**RE: HB 4007**

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

The Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association is a nonprofit professional association for experts, private investigators, and attorneys who represent Oregon's children and parents in juvenile dependency proceedings, youth in juvenile delinquency proceedings, adults in criminal proceedings at the trial and appellate level, as well as civil commitment proceedings throughout the state of Oregon.

The American Bar Association study, "The Oregon Project," found that Oregon has only one-third of the public defense attorneys needed to serve current caseloads. This crisis has been years in the making through underinvestment resulting in crushing caseloads and low compensation rates. People are leaving this field of work, and new lawyers and other professionals are not coming along to replace them. There are people charged with serious crimes who have been sitting in jail without an attorney for months. Any funding that will address the immediate public defense crisis should be given priority, however, this bill would go a long way for our public defense providers. We thank Chair Bynum for caring about public defense in Oregon and for bringing this bill forward.

OCDLA represents attorneys from all over the state. It is not possible for our rural public defense providers to maintain 100% caseload of public defense cases and maintain a living wage. Our rural public defense providers maintain a mixed practice. We would only be supportive of an amendment that allows a mix of provider types to participate in the program, as seen in the attorney practice ratio of 50% or more, because that would allow public defense providers from all over the state to take advantage of this program.

We thank Chair Bynum for caring about public defense in Oregon.