



**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

DATE: March 9, 2023

TO: Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Evans, and Members of the  
Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety

FROM: Kimberly McCullough, Legislative Director  
Oregon Department of Justice

SUBJECT: Support for Oregon Judicial Department Budget Requests

As the state's largest law firm, the Oregon Department of Justice understands how important it is to have a properly funded judicial system. Judges and courts exist to protect our liberties and our most fundamental rights as set forth in our federal and state constitutions. They also serve as a crucial venue for the peaceful resolution of disputes. Our courts play a key role in so many aspects of our lives, including public safety, public defense, behavioral health, housing and homelessness, equity and justice, and economic vitality. This is why we are providing testimony in support of OJD budget today.

While we generally support a properly funded court system, we want to lift up our particular support of several important items in OJD's budget requests:

- **Salaries to Attract and Retain Judges:** Without proper compensation, it is difficult to recruit and retain a highly qualified workforce. It is also difficult to recruit diverse candidates from a variety of backgrounds and with lived experience that is crucial to promotion of equity and access to justice. This is why we support better compensation for Oregon's judges. And we would be remiss if we didn't mention that the same principle applies to our statewide electeds and legislators.
- **Pay Jurors More Than \$10 per day to Keep Democracy Strong:** Oregon currently has one of the lowest jury pay and mileage reimbursement rates in the nation. These rates are inadequate to cover many of the financial losses Oregonians incur from fulfilling their required jury service duty, including loss of work, child-care, elder care, parking, transportation, and food costs. Increased rates will help ensure that juries more accurately represent our communities which, in turn, will increase our communities' access to justice and confidence in our government.

- **Strengthen Oregon’s pretrial release system:** As members of the workgroup that crafted SB 48 (which made significant changes to Oregon’s pretrial release system), and as an agency that works closely with victims, survivors and their advocates, we understand the importance of properly funding this system to ensure that our courts can implement best practices to keep our communities safe and ensure that victims are properly notified and provided with the information need.
- **Fund Family Treatment Courts to return children to safe homes:** These courts utilize a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to serve parents and families who enter the child welfare system due to parental substance use disorders. DOJ’s Child Advocacy Section helps protect abused, neglected and abandoned children throughout Oregon, and we have seen first-hand how crucial and effective treatment courts are for helping to create safety for Oregon families. Oregon should continue to grow its funding of these courts to ensure they are available and effective for all families who need them.

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