

ELIZABETH H. MEUSE

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Sen. Floyd Prozanski
Sen.FloydProzanski@OregonLegislature.gov

Rep. Paul Evans
rep.paulevans@oregonlegislature.gov

Rep. Kim Wallan
rep.kimwallan@oregonlegislature.gov

Sen. Dennis Linthicum
sen.DennisLinthicum@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: Criminal Defense Consortia and SB 337

Dear Sen. Prozanski, Rep. Evans, Rep. Wallan, and Sen. Linthicum:

I have been an attorney in Oregon for ten years and a member of a local consortia, the Marion County Juvenile Advocacy Consortium (MJAC), since 2020. I am concerned about the provisions of SB 337-1 that would eliminate public defense consortia, including MJAC.

MJAC consists of 14 attorneys who represent children and parents in juvenile delinquency and dependency/ child welfare cases. Many of us, including myself, have a 1.0 FTE and exclusively take juvenile public defense cases. We provide mentorship, support, and training through our consortia and have built a supportive environment with high standards for our members. If consortia are eliminated, I believe that many of our group, including myself, will step away from public defense work entirely due to the administrative burden of contracting with the state and loss of the structure and community our consortia provide.

SB 337-1's provisions that replace consortia exasperate the public defense crisis rather than fix it. Please reconsider the elimination of this critical service delivery model.

Sincerely,

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