



February 6, 2024

Rep. Jason Kropf, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Anderson and Wallan,

The City of Springfield thanks you for the opportunity to share our support for HB 4001, which establishes a task force on specialty courts. We appreciate that the bill recognizes the role specialty courts play and that it seeks to improve their effectiveness. However, as drafted, the membership of the task force created by HB 4001 lacks an important perspective, that of the municipal specialty courts.

The City of Springfield operates a municipal court that strives to provide access to a fair and equitable justice system by protecting the rights of individuals, preserving the welfare of the community, and inspiring public confidence. In 2023, 2500 criminal cases were filed in the Springfield Municipal Court; cases that would've been handled by the circuit court in Lane County, thereby saving time and money and better meeting the needs of our community members. However, resources at all levels are scarce and including these courts in the study proposed would help identify where improvements to the funding model can be made.

In 2024, the City began operating the Springfield Municipal Adult Rehabilitation and Treatment Court (SMART). This specialty court serves criminally involved individuals with substance use or co-occurring disorders and provides them with the opportunity to participate in treatment, supportive recovery, and formal supervision services as opposed to being incarcerated, fined, or other collateral impacts. SMART is supported by a U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant for four years and the City is exploring opportunities for operational funding into the future.

It is critical the task force includes the perspective of municipal specialty courts. We would greatly benefit from the knowledge of some of the senior specialty courts in Oregon and use these connections to better our court and to seek additional funding to support our model.

We urge your support of HB 4001 with the addition of municipal specialty courts on the task force. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Judge James Tierney