



Transforming the legal profession by pursuing equitable access to the legal system and equity for women and communities who are systemically oppressed.

January 25, 2025

To: House Early Childhood and Community Services (HECCS) committee
Attn: Representatives Evans, Mannix, Anderson, Lewis, Wallan, and Senator Patterson

Re: HB 2842 Court and Community Care Program

Dear Committee Members,

The Mary Leonard Chapter of Oregon Women Lawyers (OWLS) writes in support of HB 2842, which will continue the Court and Community Care Program (previously Court Care) that provides safe place for children while their parents attend court-related or other business in Marion County.

OWLS Mary Leonard Chapter services the mid-Willamette Valley as part of a statewide legal professional organization dedicated to transforming the legal profession by pursuing equitable access to the legal system and equity for women and communities who are systemically oppressed. OWLS Mary Leonard Chapter sponsors continuing legal education, professional networking, and fundraising events for local organizations that align with our mission. In 2025, we donated proceeds from our Day out for Court Care fundraiser in the amount of \$7,394.85 to help re-establish the program post-Covid in Marion County. However, this and similar efforts to raise funds do not stretch far enough to implement this important program.

HB 2842 will provide the funding needed to move forward with the Court and Community Care program. It will improve access to justice for low-income families and protect children from witnessing traumatic court proceedings while litigants, advocates, and court staff give their full attention to court business. Lack of affordable, quality childcare should not prevent parents and caregivers from complying with mandatory court appearances, obtaining a restraining order, challenging an eviction, or exercising other legal rights. The Court and Community Care program established by HB 2842 will provide necessary childcare to allow parents and caregivers access to the courts.

In addition to attending court proceedings, caretakers with minor children often need to access services, such as meetings with mental health professionals, medical professionals, parole officers, government benefit personnel, and potential employers. Court and Community Care provides caretakers with free drop-in childcare while they address those important needs, ensuring that caretakers can provide a safe, healthy home for their children.

For these reasons, OWSL Mary Leonard Chapter encourages you to pass HB 2842.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Rob Johnston', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rob Johnston, President
OWLS Mary Leonard Chapter
PO Box 773
Salem, OR 97308