



February 4, 2025

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide supportive comments on SB 474 and for your attention to public defense in Oregon. My name is Addison Sandoval, and I am a JD/MBA graduate student at the University of Oregon School of Law and Lundquist College of Business, currently participating in the Criminal Defense Clinic. I joined this clinic to gain hands-on experience representing clients. What I have gained, however, is far more than just legal training—it has been an eye-opening journey into a world I had never truly seen before.

Before this experience, I understood public defense in the abstract: as a necessary pillar of justice. But stepping into the role of an advocate, working with real people facing real consequences, has transformed my perspective. I have seen firsthand the systemic challenges our clients face—how poverty, trauma, and circumstance intersect with the criminal legal system. These are not just cases; they are lives, often hanging in the balance. This clinic has deepened my commitment to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background or resources, has a fair chance at justice.

Through this clinic, I have:

- Managed multiple cases from start to finish, gaining critical courtroom experience that has prepared me to step into public defense roles immediately after graduation.
- Handled real misdemeanor cases under the supervision of a qualified attorney, directly contributing to addressing Oregon's public defense crisis.
- Learned how to build trust with clients who often feel abandoned by the system, a skill that is just as important as knowing the law.
- Witnessed the human impact of legal advocacy, seeing how a strong defense can change the course of a person's life.

One of the most transformative aspects of this experience has been working under the guidance of Reid Kajikawa, my supervising attorney. Reid does more than teach the law—he demonstrates, every day, what it means to be an effective and compassionate public defender. From the way he builds trust with clients to the way he fiercely advocates for fair outcomes, his mentorship has been invaluable. He has shown me that being a public defender is not just about legal knowledge; it is about empathy, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

Reid has also instilled in me the ability to balance the demands of this work—how to advocate tirelessly while maintaining perspective, how to push for the best outcomes without losing sight of the human element. These are lessons I will carry with me throughout my career.



Public defense clinics like this are essential. They do more than educate law students—they create a pipeline of committed, well-trained attorneys who are ready to serve the moment they graduate. These clinics bridge the gap between law school and practice, ensuring that new lawyers step into public defense with the knowledge, experience, and perspective necessary to be effective advocates.

I urge the committee to support continued funding for law school public defense clinics through SB 474. By doing so, the legislature will ensure that more students receive the training they need to serve as public defenders, addressing the critical shortage of qualified attorneys and strengthening Oregon's justice system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Addison Sandoval". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Addison Sandoval  
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