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**ALTRUISTIC**  
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1-20-25

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Public Safety

From: Altruistic Recovery

Re: New Court House for Malheur County

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I am writing in support of funding for a new courthouse in Malheur County.

Altruistic Recovery is an outpatient behavioral health facility located in Malheur County, serving clients from Ontario, Vale, Nyssa, nearby Oregon communities, and a significant population from Idaho, as we are a border town. Our organization plays a vital role in the community, working closely with law enforcement, probation officers, the Department of Human Services, attorneys, schools, and the county jail population. Many of our clients have legal or court involvement, and we are frequently called upon to provide treatment updates and recommendations for individuals with mental health and substance use challenges.

The current courthouse facilities present significant challenges to maintaining privacy, confidentiality, and safety for all involved. The existing layout forces individuals with opposing interests—defendants and accusers, families in sensitive permanency cases, DHS workers, and case managers—to share the same small public hallway while waiting for their cases to be called. This lack of separation creates stress, compromises safety, and often violates privacy.

As a behavioral health provider, we are required to uphold strict confidentiality mandates, including HIPAA and CFR 42 Part 2, which governs the protection of substance use disorder treatment information. When Altruistic Recovery staff provide treatment information to the court, ensuring the protection of personal health information (PHI) is nearly impossible in such close quarters. The proximity of our clients to others and the general public accessing courthouse services exacerbates these issues.


Beyond privacy concerns, the lack of adequate and secure space impedes legal counsel from properly preparing clients, creates unsafe waiting conditions,

Beyond privacy concerns, the lack of adequate and secure space impedes legal counsel from properly preparing clients, creates unsafe waiting conditions, and undermines the dignity of individuals involved in sensitive court proceedings. This long-standing issue has significantly affected the efficiency, safety, and fairness of courthouse operations in Malheur County.

A new courthouse with sufficient space to separate public services from court-related matters and to provide private, secure areas for individuals involved in cases is essential to ensuring safety, privacy, and the equitable administration of justice.

For these reasons, I strongly support funding for a new courthouse in Malheur County. This investment is critical to protecting the privacy, safety, and rights of all individuals served by the court system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annette Volk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "V" and "L".

Annette Volk – Director

Altruistic Recovery

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