

March 5, 2025

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and members of the Committee,

My name is Joe Calhoun. I have practiced indigent criminal defense in Multnomah County for almost 37 years. I have had a contract to provide indigent criminal defense with the State of Oregon for almost 25 years. Four other highly experienced lawyers work at my firm. All our work is indigent defense work.

The decision to discontinue contracting with consortia has always befuddled me. The lawyers in our consortia have always been recognized as professional and providing a high level of representation.

To dismantle us as a group makes no sense. One only has to look to the level of service we have provided during and after Covid to see our value.

The five lawyers in my office are able to provide support for each other through covering court appearances when necessary, providing a soundboard regarding the multitude of legal issues, and sharing advice on how to deal with the myriad of issues with the mainly difficult clients that we represent on a daily basis.

What we do is very challenging. A group setting provides the supporting camaraderie necessary to provide a high level of representation.

I invite you to speak with anyone in Multnomah County and inquire as to the value we provide as a consortia. Please talk to any and all judges, DA's, probation officers, court clerks or judicial assistants to see what they say about us.

We do our job. We are professional. We do our job very well. To cease to work with us is not only befuddling, it is like sitting in the Oval Office and being asked to be thankful for our jobs.

Sincerely,
Joe Calhoun

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