

March 15, 2025

To members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Allan Parachini. I live in Tualatin and am a member of the Washington County Public Safety Coordinating Council. I write in emphatic support of HB 3180.

The Washington County Courthouse is antiquated and dangerous to people who visit and work in it. I have a unique perspective on this in that I was the public information officer for the Los Angeles Superior Court for more than eight years. During that time, I came into close contact with a number of courthouses with substantial life safety risks, in a system that had 36 courthouses compared to one here in Washington County.

You could say I know a bad courthouse when I see it. The Washington County Courthouse is such a facility.

It is unreinforced brick that has also not been bolted at the roofline. It would be at high risk of collapse in even a modest earthquake. As the presiding judge has remarked, she realizes here own life could be at risk if she was in the building when a quake struck.

The stairwells are dangerously and irreparably narrow and would create substantial risk if the building had to be evacuated in a hurry. The hallways are too narrow. The two entrances are incompatible with efficient security screening and probably could not be renovated. This leaves lines of jurors standing in the cold and rain as the slow pace of screening impedes their entry. In other words, exactly how a court should NOT treat its jurors.

In all, the life safety and security risks of the Washington County Courthouse make it unfit for continued use. It must be replaced. Combined with the fact that the court is at least two judges short of the number of bench officers it should have, these risks establish that this building should be the top priority, before any other courthouse replacement project, of the Legislature.

This bill is a first step. It simply must be passed.