

ELIZABETH H. MEUSE

Attorney at Law

March 19, 2025

Re: HB 5031

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans and Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety:

I am an attorney in Salem and a member of the Juvenile Advocacy Collective (“JAC”). JAC is non-profit consortia here in Marion County that consists of 17 attorneys that practice in juvenile court. We represent parents and children in child welfare proceedings, and children who have been accused of violating the law.

I support the GRB’s and appreciate the inclusion of a COLA, which will help our consortium retain quality attorneys. As page 142 and 143 of Director Kampfe’s presentation shows, 80% of juvenile cases are handled by consortiums like mine. In many counties, including Marion County, consortia are the only provider of juvenile defense. This is in part because the type of law we practice is specialized and necessitates an understanding of the Oregon Juvenile Code, the Oregon Criminal Code, the Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act, and administrative law. Supporting consortia is vital for juvenile defense in Oregon.

In addition to the COLA, please also ensure that we can adequately co-chair cases. Consortia are one segment of public defense that has historically not received any funds specifically for training. My consortia providers mentorship and co-counsel to new members on our own. Please do not cut compensation to 50% for second attorneys on cases, as consortia like mine frequently use the second attorney assigned to train new lawyers. Cutting compensation/reducing MAC to 50% for a second lawyer would reduce our capacity to allow new attorneys to co-chair with more experienced attorneys.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

/s/ Elizabeth Meuse

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