

**COUNCIL 75**

Good morning Co-Chair Broadman, Evans, and Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety.

For the record, my name is Catriona McCracken. I am a Senior Assistant Attorney General at the Oregon Department of Justice, General Counsel Division, Business Activities Section. I have worked for DOJ for approximately twenty years over three distinct periods of time. First, I was a law clerk for the Civil Enforcement Division from May/June 1991 through December 1992; second, I was an Assistant Attorney General in the General Counsel Division Human Services Section from February 1997 through March 2006; and third, I am a Senior Assistant Attorney General with the Business Activities Section from July 2015 to the present – I am retiring at the end of August 2025 which makes this my last opportunity to appear before you, as a proud member of, and Executive Board Secretary of, the Oregon Association of Justice Attorneys (OAJA – AFSCME Local 1085) to testify in support of AG Rayfield’s DOJ budget which will support the work that line AAGs do on a daily basis for the protection of the people of the State of Oregon.

As a member of the Executive Board for OAJA, and as an OAJA Shop Steward I, like President Heather Lou Weigler, hear from DOJ colleagues across the agency about the workloads they face, the availability or lack thereof of management and other senior attorneys to mentor and guide them, their desire for more in-house and cross division training opportunities and so on. In the past, while OAJA has gathered such information, there have been fewer opportunities to transmit that information to management and to have it heard – this year AG Rayfield specifically sought out OAJA and asked OAJA to let his team know of any areas of workload concern. Because of AG Rayfield’s outreach to OAJA, OAJA is able to be here today standing in support of DOJ’s Policy Option Packages which emphasize the areas of need identified by OAJA.

As you have heard from DOJ management over the past week of testimony, Trial Division is seeing a significant uptick in its case load and needs 33 additional positions to support that caseload, POP 410 will provide the necessary funding for Trial Division. Pop 410 will also reduce the expense of having to contract for private attorneys to appear on the State’s behalf as Special Assistant’s Attorneys General. Pop 221 will add capacity to the Civil Enforcement Division for antitrust and privacy work, wildfire investigations and recovery, and also for Medicaid Fraud. Pop 221 will also reduce the expense of having to contract for private attorneys to appear on the State’s behalf as Special Assistant’s Attorneys General. Pop 271 will promote public safety by adding capacity to the Criminal Justice Division. Pop 271 will bring management ratios in line and add necessary administrative support.



April 17, 2025

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The need for more in-house attorneys is something that DOJ management and OAJA strongly agree upon. In-house attorneys are already familiar with the work of the State, do not have to be brought up to speed, do not have to be so closely managed, and are not billed out at the exorbitant rates of private attorneys thus providing both time and money savings for Oregon taxpayers. And all these savings will occur notwithstanding the fact that in-house jobs are union jobs covered by living wage union contracts.

As President Weigler noted in her testimony, adequately funding DOJ is critical to protecting vulnerable populations from exploitation and abuse, advancing the public interest, and to safeguarding taxpayer dollars. Current funding levels do not adequately support the legal and programmatic work needed to best serve the people of Oregon, and OAJA urges you to approve DOJ's proposed Policy Option Packages expanding funding for DOJ's legal and programmatic work.

Thank you.

Catriona McCracken