



To: Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety

From: Kathleen Lamar

Date: April 17, 2025

RE: SEIU in support of DOJ HB 5014

Thank you co-chairs Broadman and Evans.

For the record, my name is Kathleen Lamar, and I am writing in support of the Oregon Department of Justice's budget. The investments outlined in the budget reflect the Attorney General's commitment to protecting working families, consumers, and seniors in 19 DOJ offices in rural, central, and metro Oregon. SEIU 503 represents over 900 dedicated public employees at the Oregon Department of Justice.

At the DOJ, I work as a Child Support Case Manager in the Financial Services Unit, and I am a member leader for SEIU Local 503. I have worked in the field offices and Finance office for 26 years. I live and work in Salem and previously worked in Oregon City and Portland for the agency. I consider my experience in both field and central work integral to the services I provide to Oregon citizens. Since 2007, I have seen a significant decrease in FTE for Division of Child Support; this has impacted the ability to provide quality services to families. As you are aware, child support provides families with financial stability and allows them to move on from TANF, OHP, and SNAP benefits. It allows the parents to be self-sufficient and able to pay rent, food, and utility bills. Right-sized orders is a program goal and the agency has supported meeting the participants where they are – in the community, virtually, and in the offices. Our offices are severely understaffed, which leaves Oregon families in need of more services because we simply cannot get the work done. The work over the last two decades has become extremely complex, and while we love what we do at DCS, the limitations of time and technology have created more work, with not enough time in the day.

DOJ is made up of several other units and programs. For example, in Crime Victim and Survivor Services, we work to ensure that financial compensation is available for victims of violent crime, such as funeral costs and sexual assault exams. This is an area to carefully consider as the Trump Administration is ending nearly \$19 million in Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding which would limit our ability to protect victims of sexual assault and

domestic abuse. And; In Consumer Protection, we ensure that Oregonians are protected against scams, shady car sales, and other predatory practices. In the last year, the number of calls to Oregon DOJ's consumer hotline has doubled. Despite our best efforts, our ability to take action against these harmful practices hasn't grown.

With more resources, we can better protect Oregonians from those who break the law and take advantage of hardworking families, consumers, and seniors. We can also continue to provide valuable child support resources to families. Please consider the investments in HB 5014 and vote "aye" to protect all Oregonians.

Thank you,

Kathleen Lamar

Member Leader, SEIU 503