

A. MICHAEL ADLER, *Judge*
WELLS B. ASHBY, *Judge*
STEPHEN P. FORTE, *Judge*
BETHANY P. FLINT, *Judge*

CIRCUIT COURT OF OREGON
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DESCHUTES COUNTY JUSTICE BUILDING
1100 NW BOND STREET
BEND, OREGON 97703
(541) 388-5300

WALTER R. MILLER, JR., *Judge*
BETH M. BAGLEY, *Judge*
ALTA J. BRADY, *Presiding Judge*

February 8, 2017

House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97031

Re: Written Testimony in Support of HB 2605 (February 14, 2017 Hearing)

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the 11th Judicial District, please accept this letter as testimony before your Committee in support of HB 2605, which includes an additional circuit court judge position for this District.

The Oregon Circuit Court Judicial Officer Workload Assessment Study completed in May, 2016 concluded that the 11th Judicial District requires an additional 2.5 judges to meet its current workload demand. Considering total available judicial resources, this places us as the third most under-judged court in the state. Of further note is that the corresponding study on staffing workload placed this District as the fourth most understaffed court in the state.

I will not attempt to overwhelm you with caseload figures and recitations of Deschutes County's legendary population growth rate. The Workload Assessment Study demonstrates the statistical basis and necessity for additional judicial resources in Deschutes County. I want instead to tell you about the efforts this Court has made to continue to serve our community despite the extremely lack of judicial resources.

Over the past six years this Court has transitioned from an individual calendar system to a master docket. A master docket is more efficient in terms of moving cases through the system. We preserved programs during the recession which assist in resolving cases without judge involvement. We have a mediation program staffed by volunteer mediators for small claims and landlord tenant disputes. We employ a family law facilitator to assist self-represented litigants in navigating the court system. We recently piloted a unique trial process in family law cases primarily aimed at self-represented litigants that reduces the amount of time spent in trial, results in trials being scheduled sooner and improves the litigants' sense of procedural justice. This innovation, which cost nothing to implement, is currently being considered for statewide expansion.

Despite these and other efforts, we cannot resolve cases within acceptable periods. For example, we have an insufficient number of judges to hear the trials scheduled weekly. Of the trials that report ready, the Court must reschedule 25% of family law trials, 19% of civil trials and 21% of criminal trials. For criminal cases, first available date for sentencing hearings is approximately 10 weeks out.

The creation of additional judge positions will require an expansion of the current courthouse. The Deschutes County Board of Commissions has committed to meeting that need.

I thank you for your thoughtful consideration of HB 2605 and welcome any questions you or committee staff may have about the 11th Judicial District, our current case management efforts and the need for additional resources to allow us to adequately serve the residents of Deschutes County.

Sincerely,

Alta J. Brady
Presiding Judge
11th Judicial District

Cc: Chief Justice Balmer
Judges of the 11th Judicial District