



OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT
Office of the State Court Administrator

April 17, 2015

Dear Volunteer Citizen Review Board Members:

Congratulations and thank you for being part of 30 years of CRB's dedicated service to Oregon's most vulnerable children and families. Since the inception of the first pilot citizen review board in Multnomah County, you have conducted more than 200,000 reviews of children in foster care statewide. This is a considerable accomplishment that has contributed to the many improvements we've seen in our state child welfare system over the last three decades.

So, why did Oregon create the citizen review board system? The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, which established the concept of semiannual reviews for children in foster care, left flexibility in who (what entity) could conduct these reviews. Some states, like New York and Nevada, chose to have judges do them. Others, like Massachusetts and Colorado, created internal administrative review bodies within the child protection agency. Oregon, however, joined states like South Carolina, Arizona, Delaware, and Maryland by forming a citizen review process where volunteers from the community serve on boards tasked with reviewing the cases.

There are obvious advantages to a process involving citizen volunteers. You are independent, you bring a wide variety of backgrounds to the table, and you usually have more time to devote to reviews including carefully reading all case material in preparation for the reviews. You offer a unique common sense perspective on child welfare cases, and provide a review environment that is typically less formal than a court hearing, often resulting in more meaningful participation from youth, parents, and foster parents. You provide those critical extra insights in cases where the stakes are so personal and life-altering. You bring transparency and public oversight to a system that is largely closed due to the confidential nature of the cases, and you help to ensure the system does not stray too far from the values it is to safeguard.

I know that we ask a lot of our volunteers. We expect you at all times to be prepared, professional, and compassionate at reviews in very tough circumstances where people are in crisis, and then to come back and do it all over again the next month. You are a special group of people that are making a difference to Oregon's children and families, and I am grateful to have you be part of the valuable work of the Judicial Department. Thank you for your dedication, your participation, and your contributions to helping ensure a better and stable future for these vulnerable children.

Sincerely,



Kingsley W. Click
State Court Administrator

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