



Skagit County Board of Commissioners

Ron Wesen, First District

Peter Browning, Second District

Lisa Janicki, Third District

February 17, 2023

Representative Dave Paul
10th Legislative District
John L. O'Brien Room 424
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Funding Request for Therapeutic Courts

Dear Representative Paul,

We, as Skagit County's Board of County Commissioners, support the funding request of \$20.6 million for ongoing investment in therapeutic courts in our district and municipal courts.

Therapeutic courts are an alternative to the traditional trial track and allow defendants, or respondents, the opportunity to obtain treatment services to address issues that may have contributed to the conduct that led to their arrest or other issues before the court. Therapeutic courts directly address the needs of individuals struggling with substance use disorder, mental health issues, and poverty.

Therapeutic courts have existed in district and municipal courts for many years and consistently demonstrate positive impacts on participants' lives. There are almost 70 therapeutic courts including behavioral health, substance use disorder, veterans, community, DUI, domestic violence, and youth courts.

Over the last two years, the Legislature invested \$9 million in existing and new therapeutic courts. There is a need for both startup costs associated with new programs and maintaining existing programs, and therapeutic courts will be best served by a source of ongoing funds.

Please include \$20.6 million in the operating budget for therapeutic courts in our district and municipal courts.

Sincerely,

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Ron Wesen, Chair

Lisa Janicki, Commissioner

Peter Browning, Commissioner

cc: Rachel Campbell