



April 14, 2019

Co-Chair Senator Betsy Johnson
Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward
Co-Chair Representative Dan Rayfield
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Oregon Legislature—State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, Rayfield and Committee Members:

Subject: Support HB 5024, With Continued Funding For PSU's Population Research Center

Washington County is pleased to support the important work of the Population Research Center at Portland State University, and recommends full state funding for this important statewide service program in HB 5024, currently before your Committee.

In my role as Government Relations Manager for Washington County, I frequently draw upon the talents and resources at the Population Research Center, to inform elected public officials and government agencies about the changing population and demographic trends in Oregon's fastest-growing County. PRC data and forecasts are essential tools for local governments planning for future housing needs, transportations demands, public schools, health care services, municipal water supplies, and the orderly development of our growing communities.

In 2017, for example, the Population Research Center helped Washington County redraw our District boundaries to more evenly balance the shifting population among our four Commission districts. Washington County has added >75,000 constituents since the 2010 U.S. Census, with most of these new neighbors settling in eastern portions of our County, including Senate Districts 16 and 17. Redefining our District boundaries would have been much more difficult if we had needed to rely on outdated and less-precise federal census data. But with help from the PRC, this work was successfully completed with virtually no criticism or complaint from our constituents, and was readily accepted by the Board of Commissioners elected to serve them.

Washington County certainly supports full funding of the Population Research Center (PRC) at PSU, as an important investment that benefits all corners of our state. By continuing to support our state's leading census research and training center, Oregon legislators will enable the PRC to provide useful demographic information for all Oregonians, continue demographic research that informs data-based policy-making at all levels of government, and will enable the PRC to continue their work to ensure a fair and accurate census of all Oregonians in 2020.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Schlueter

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Government Relations Manager
Washington County

County Administrative Office

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