



1500 SW First Ave, Suite 400
Portland, OR 97201

Open-Oregon.com
OpenOregondotcom@gmail.com

February 5, 2020

To: [Senate Committee On General Government and Emergency Preparedness](#)

[Senator Chuck Riley](#), Chair

Email: sggep.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: **[SB 1506](#)** – Office of the Public Record Advocate – **Support**

Thank you for your work for the public on government transparency issues. Open Oregon is a member of the National Freedom of Information Coalition with representatives of public, private and governmental bodies. We favor government transparency at all levels, which consistently ranks among those issues most important to Oregonians.

We write today to urge support for Senate Bill 1506, which would establish that Oregon's Office of the Public Records Advocate is an independent office accountable to the Public Records Advisory Council.

As you are aware, the office was created in 2017 to address long standing tensions in the area of public access to information about its governmental bodies. In its first two years, the office has played an important role in helping record seekers and record keepers understand and navigate a confusing legal thicket of public access issues.

This office is also called upon to mediate fair and lawful resolutions when conflicts arise between governmental bodies and record seekers. This role demands that the advocate is able to exercise independent judgment, regardless of the parties involved in any particular conflict.

Absent this change, the public trust in the Office of the Advocate would be irreparably harmed, and would indeed negate the very purpose of the office. We urge the Senate to pass this important clarification into law and vote yes on Senate Bill 1506.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for public debate on this proposal.

Shasta Kearns Moore
President, Open Oregon
A National Freedom of Information Coalition chapter

cc: Open Oregon Board
Therese Bottomly, Treasurer
Duane Bosworth
Tim Gleason
Emily Harris
Mary Beth Herkert
Lisa Phipps
Norman Turrill
John Schrag
Kateri Walsh
Nick Christensen
Justin Mitzimberg
Adam Gibbs
Dawn Albright