

Enrolled
Senate Bill 177

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CHAPTER

AN ACT

Relating to hearsay; amending ORS 40.465; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. ORS 40.465 is amended to read:

40.465. (1) "Unavailability as a witness" includes situations in which the declarant:

- (a) Is exempted by ruling of the court on the ground of privilege from testifying concerning the subject matter of a statement;
- (b) Persists in refusing to testify concerning the subject matter of a statement despite an order of the court to do so;
- (c) Testifies to a lack of memory of the subject matter of a statement;
- (d) Is unable to be present or to testify at the hearing because of death or then existing physical or mental illness or infirmity; or
- (e) Is absent from the hearing and the proponent of the declarant's statement has been unable to procure the declarant's attendance (or in the case of an exception under subsection (3)(b), (c) or (d) of this section, the declarant's attendance or testimony) by process or other reasonable means.

(2) A declarant is not unavailable as a witness if the declarant's exemption, refusal, claim of lack of memory, inability, or absence is due to the procurement or wrongdoing of the proponent of the declarant's statement for the purpose of preventing the witness from attending or testifying.

(3) The following are not excluded by ORS 40.455 if the declarant is unavailable as a witness:

(a) Testimony given as a witness at another hearing of the same or a different proceeding, or in a deposition taken in compliance with law in the course of the same or another proceeding, if the party against whom the testimony is now offered, or, in a civil action or proceeding a predecessor in interest, had an opportunity and similar motive to develop the testimony by direct, cross, or re-direct examination.

(b) A statement made by a declarant while believing that death was imminent, concerning the cause or circumstances of what the declarant believed to be impending death.

(c) A statement which was at the time of its making so far contrary to the declarant's pecuniary or proprietary interest, or so far tended to subject the declarant to civil or criminal liability, or to render invalid a claim by the declarant against another, that a reasonable person in the declarant's position would not have made the statement unless the person believed it to be true. A statement tending to expose the declarant to criminal liability and offered to exculpate the accused is not admissible unless corroborating circumstances clearly indicate the trustworthiness of the statement.

(d)(A) A statement concerning the declarant's own birth, adoption, marriage, divorce, legitimacy, relationship by blood or adoption or marriage, ancestry, or other similar fact of personal or family history, even though the declarant had no means of acquiring personal knowledge of the matter stated; or

(B) A statement concerning the foregoing matters, and death also, of another person, if the declarant was related to the other by blood, adoption, or marriage or was so intimately associated with the other's family as to be likely to have accurate information concerning the matter declared.

(e) A statement made at or near the time of the transaction by a person in a position to know the facts stated therein, acting in the person's professional capacity and in the ordinary course of professional conduct.

(f) A statement offered against a party who intentionally or knowingly engaged in criminal conduct that directly caused the death of the declarant, or directly caused the declarant to become unavailable as a witness because of incapacity or incompetence.

(g) A statement offered against a party who engaged in, directed or otherwise participated in wrongful conduct that was intended to cause the declarant to be unavailable as a witness, and did cause the declarant to be unavailable.

(h) A statement not specifically covered by any of the foregoing exceptions but having equivalent circumstantial guarantees of trustworthiness, if the court determines that (A) the statement is offered as evidence of a material fact; (B) the statement is more probative on the point for which it is offered than any other evidence which the proponent can procure through reasonable efforts; and (C) the general purposes of the Oregon Evidence Code and the interests of justice will best be served by admission of the statement into evidence. However, a statement may not be admitted under this paragraph unless the proponent of it makes known to the adverse party the intention to offer the statement and the particulars of it, including the name and address of the declarant, sufficiently in advance of the trial or hearing, or as soon as practicable after it becomes apparent that the statement is probative of the issues at hand, to provide the adverse party with a fair opportunity to prepare to meet it.

(4) For purposes of subsection (3)(f) and (g) of this section, the proponent of a statement is not required to issue a material witness order, as defined in ORS 136.608, or seek sanctions for contempt in order to show the unavailability of the declarant under subsection (1)(e) of this section.

SECTION 2. This 2021 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2021 Act takes effect on its passage.

Passed by Senate April 14, 2021

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Lori L. Brocker, Secretary of Senate

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Peter Courtney, President of Senate

Passed by House June 3, 2021

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Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

Received by Governor:

.....M.,....., 2021

Approved:

.....M.,....., 2021

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Kate Brown, Governor

Filed in Office of Secretary of State:

.....M.,....., 2021

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Shemia Fagan, Secretary of State