

CHIEF OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF
STATE

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SECRETARY OF STATE

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February 10, 2022

Chair Smith Warner, Vice- Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Breese Iverson, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, I am Jessica Ventura, Legislative Director for Secretary of State Shemia Fagan. The Secretary's mission is simple, it is to build trust. To build trust between the people of Oregon and our state government so that our public services can make a positive difference in people's lives. One of her most important roles as Secretary of State is serving as Oregon's State Auditor. This role provides one of the most exciting opportunities for our agency to fulfill our mission and realize the Secretary's vision and goals.

The Secretary of State's Audits Division plays a key role in making sure our state's resources have the biggest possible impact in the lives of Oregonians. In May of 2021, our Audits Division released an audit report on the [Oregon Governments Ethics Commission](#) (OGEC). The OGEC plays a key role to hold public officials accountable when they use their position for personal financial gain and has existed since the 1970's. The purpose of our audit was to evaluate whether there are ways in which Oregon can improve its government ethics framework — particularly the strength of the state's ethics laws, the commission's structure, training requirements, and efforts to promote an ethical culture. Our audit also evaluated whether there are ways in which OGEC can improve its processes for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating ethics complaints and training government employees on ethics laws.

HB 4140 addresses several risks and opportunities identified by our audit to enhance the state's ethical framework and to strengthen transparency and accountability. The impact of this audit demonstrates the important work our Audits Division does to ensure public dollars and policies are being implemented effectively and transparently in alignment with the legislatures vision. Secretary Fagan provided an overview of her [Audit Plan for the 2022-2023](#) year. All Oregonians benefit from effective, well-managed public services. This year, thanks to the critical work of the Audits Division, state agencies will gain valuable insight into how to improve outcomes in a range of topics that impact the lives of people who live and work in Oregon. This work is at the center of what it means to have a transparent, accessible state government that works for the people of Oregon.

We thank you for your time and are happy to meet with you to discuss our audit work.

Thank you,
Jessica Ventura

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