

HB 3171 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

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Meeting Dates: 3/16

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Specifies that information from communications made by participants and counselors as part of a peer support counseling session conducted by mass transit district personnel is considered confidential and may not be disclosed by any participant in the counseling session.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Many transit agencies provide peer support counseling to employees in a manner similar to that provided to first responders, with the goal of helping the employees deal with traumatic situations encountered as part of their jobs. There has been an increase in violence and threats against transit workers and operators during the past several years, exacerbated in part by the COVID-19 pandemic and other causes. While statute provides confidentiality protections for peer support counseling related to law enforcement agencies and emergency service providers, there is no similar confidentiality for mass transit district employees.

House Bill 3171 extends confidentiality protections under ORS 181A.835 to peer support counseling participants from mass transit district employees.