



Board of Commissioners

David Henslee, Commissioner
Position One

Kelley Minty, Commissioner
Position Two

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Position Three

March 2, 2023

Senator Janeen Sollman, Co-Chair
Representative Paul Evans, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety

RE: Support of Senate Bill 5514

Dear Senator Sollman, Representative Evan and Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer support for Senate Bill 5514. SB 5514 appropriates money for the funding of the Oregon Department of Justice. The Department of Justice fills crucial roles relating to health and safety of our citizens. We are extremely supportive of the work of the Department of Justice based on our experiences and interactions with DOJ staff.

Recently, the Klamath County District Attorney resigned. At the time of the resignation, the District attorney's Office was ineffective and had lost the trust and support of government officials, department directors, and community members. There was significant frustration from staff at the DA's office and turn-over was over 40%.

The Department of Justice stepped in and provided Klamath County with a temporary district attorney to maintain the functions of the office until a new district attorney is identified. Without this assistance, prosecution would have come to a standstill and public safety would have been negatively impacted. We have been extremely impressed with the leadership, expertise, and vision John Casalino (DOJ Prosecutor) has provided as he fills the role of Klamath County District Attorney. Our DA's Office has changed dramatically over the past few months and is on a trajectory to be an exceptional office into the future.

We also want to shine light on the assistance the Department of Justice provides our law enforcement agencies by investigating high profile cases. Several times, DOJ investigators and prosecutors have provided much needed expertise, guidance, and technical assistance to Klamath County law enforcement. Without this assistance, these investigations would have been significantly impaired due to the lack of local capacity, knowledge, and/or equipment.

Funding the Department of Justice is vital to support safe and healthy communities. We respectfully urge the Committee to support the passage of SB 5514.

Respectfully,

David A. Henslee
Commissioner

Kelley Minty
Vice Chair

Derrick DeGroot
Chair