

11 February 2023

Senate Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon

Chair Floyd Prozanski
Vice-chair Kim Thatcher
Member Senators Sara Gelsler Blouin, Dennis Linthicum and James Manning

I open this stating “This is not an emergency”. Never should a change in the structure of a government be considered an **emergency**. The -4 amendment is not just about passing Probate off to Circuit Court, it also removes the title and duties along with length of the term of a position the people elected!

This admendmment does nothing but take away the people of these counties voice and add cost to the State Circuit Courts budget. As the -4 is written, 2 of the 3 Court members can change a County’s government structure simply because they don’t like a newly elected Judge or a candidate running for the position.

Can this happen? Yes it can!! It is happening in my County, Gilliam, as we speak!! There has been hours of testimony against the Gilliam Court eliminating both the Juvenile and Probate duties of the Judge, yet they continue move forward changing our structure of government. I want to be loud and clear on this, “3 people are changoing our structure of our government with very little support of the 2000 people living in the County”. The only thing preventing this from being completed is ORS 111.055, which requires the legislature to approve it. The -4 amendment would remove that, and open the door for 2 of 3 Court members to remove a Judge, change the duties and the length of the term of which it was elected, along with the structure of a county government with a simple Order!

I agree, the change of a government structure is a decision to be made within a County border and not at the State level, but only when the entire electorate is involved!

Steve Shaffer
Former Gilliam County Judge
Condon, Oregon 97823