

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

HB 5031

Public Defense Commision

To: Ways and Means Full Committee

From: Public Safety Subcommittee

Carrier: Senator Broadman

HB 5031 is the budget bill for the Public Defense Commission. The Commission's statutory duty is to establish and maintain a public defense system that ensures the provision of public defense services consistent with the Oregon Constitution, the United States Constitution and Oregon and national standards of justice.

The Public Safety Subcommittee recommends a total funds budget of \$707.7 million, including \$681 million General Fund and \$26.7 million Other Funds. The budget includes 180 positions and 179.80 FTE. The budget is \$91 million, or 14.8%, more than the 2023-25 legislatively approved budget and \$61.9 million, or 9.6%, more than the 2025-27 current service level.

Funding is provided to reflect the April 2025 public defense caseload forecast, and to continue to address the unrepresented defendant crisis, including the establishment of an Enhanced Provider Capacity Pilot Program in the six crisis counties, continuation of funding for law schools, a dedicated position for Expedited Resolution Case Docketing, and Case Assignment Coordinators.

The recommended budget includes one-time funding for the anticipated carryforward of previously assigned cases through the Temporary Hourly Increase Program, which will end on June 30, 2025.

The recommendation includes direction to the Department of Administrative Services to unschedule \$22.1 million General Fund, to be scheduled only after the submission of a report by the Commission in the 2026 session with a detailed comparison between budgeted and actual capacity.

The recommendation includes three budget notes directing the Commission to provide an interim status report, reporting on budgeted capacity, and reporting on the outcomes of the investment in law schools.

Direction is included for the Commission to report in the 2026 session on Key Performance Measures and targets, with a new proposed measurement for the percentage of financially eligible defendants/persons receiving a public defender with a target of 100%.

The Public Safety Subcommittee recommends HB 5031 be amended by the –1 amendment and be reported out do pass, as amended.