



Steve Gunnels District Attorney

1164 NW Bond Street • Bend, Oregon 97703
(541) 388-6520 • Fax: (541) 330-4691
www.dcca.us

February 11, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Letter of Support for Oregon Criminal Justice Commission's 2025-2027 Biannual Budget

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission's (CJC) 2025-2027 biannual budget, including the proposed funding for several critical grant programs that directly impact public safety and justice initiatives in our county. As the District Attorney for Deschutes County, I have seen firsthand how these programs provide essential resources for local law enforcement, justice system partners, and community-based interventions.

Our office receives CJC grant funding for multiple initiatives that have been instrumental in improving outcomes for individuals involved in the justice system and enhancing our ability to better serve our community and improve community safety. Two of the grant programs being discussed during this review are not only important to the work of my office but our system- and community-based partners:

- The **Restorative Justice Grant Fund** supports Deschutes County's collaborative pre-charge Emerging Adult Program for 18- to 25-year-olds. It offers an alternative to traditional prosecution, focusing on accountability, victim involvement, and meaningful rehabilitation. Funding from **POP 106** would ensure the continuation and expansion of this initiative, which increases opportunities to reduce recidivism and improve community safety.
- The **Justice Reinvestment Equity Program** provides support for a joint initiative between Deschutes County's Community Justice, the DA's Office, and community members to address criminal justice inequities. The work supported by **POP 090** has been instrumental in opening lines of communication with the public and identifying areas where our departments can improve to better serve our community overall.

In addition, through the direct guidance and support provided by CJC staff, my office, our partners, and Deschutes County residents benefit from **POP 100, 101, and 102**. The funding provided through these propositions provides administrative support for two additional grant programs (**Illegal Marijuana Market Enforcement** and **Organized Retail Theft**.) my office collaborates on with local law enforcement agencies.

CJC's staff ensures we receive the funding in a timely fashion, and their expertise, assistance with data analysis, and connections help our programs have an even greater impact. The services they provide for our agencies are invaluable.

I also want to recognize the importance of other proposed funding initiatives that strengthen justice and behavioral health services in Deschutes County and in other counties. The **Oregon Behavioral Health Deflection Grant (POP 550BH)** and the **Oregon Jail-Based Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Grant (POP 551BH)** play a vital role in providing treatment alternatives, addressing underlying behavioral health challenges, and promoting positive justice system outcomes across the state and within Deschutes County.

We urge your support for the proposed budget to ensure these critical initiatives continue to benefit our communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Steve Gunnels
Deschutes County District Attorney