



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

February 11, 2025

Chair Floyd Prozanski  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Oregon State Legislature

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

As the Mayor of Springfield, I am writing in strong support of SB 473, which creates the crime of threatening a public official and provides necessary escalated penalties for repeat offenders. Unfortunately, too many public officials, myself included, know firsthand the profound impact that such behavior can have—not only on the targeted individuals but also on their families, their sense of safety, and their ability to perform their duties without fear. Whether it's through direct threats, anonymous messages, or verbal harassment, public officials are often exposed to a level of hostility that goes beyond ordinary criticism and into dangerous territory. These threats can weigh heavily on the well-being of those who have chosen to serve their communities and can even dissuade others from pursuing a career in public service.

While there are existing laws, such as menacing (ORS 163.190) and stalking (ORS 163.732), that address some forms of threatening behavior, they do not specifically cover threats made against public officials. Public officials are often targeted simply because of their roles, and current laws require a heightened standard of proof for determining an imminent threat, making it difficult to address the behavior unless it escalates. SB 473 would provide much-needed clarity by addressing threats aimed specifically at public officials, allowing for decisive action before behavior becomes violent.

This bill not only recognizes the unique and dangerous nature of threats directed at those in public service but also introduces appropriate consequences. The proposed punishment as a Class A misdemeanor for first offenses, and a Class C felony for repeat offenses, ensures that continued threatening behavior is met with the seriousness it deserves. Public officials should feel safe reporting for work every day, without fear of harassment or intimidation.

Threats against public officials do more than just target an individual—they destabilize public trust in governance and weaken the entire system of service that we rely on. If we want our public servants to continue working on behalf of the people, they need to know that we have their backs. SB 473 sends a clear message: threats against public officials are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

I urge your support of SB 473 and appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean VanGordon", is written over a white background.

Sean VanGordon  
Mayor, City of Springfield