



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

401 E 3rd St, Ste. 200 • The Dalles, OR 97058  
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To: Senate Committee On Human Services  
From: Jeff Justesen, Commissioner

RE: SB 915

Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Committee Members

**\*\*I am a Wasco County Commissioner submitting this in my individual capacity\*\***

- As a current County Commissioner and a past Juvenile Detention Facility Manager, I am opposed to SB 915 which would direct the Office of Training Investigations and Safety (OTIS) to investigate all allegations of abuse within juvenile detention centers and youth correctional facilities.
- Local juvenile detention facilities are funded by county governments, and are authorized by Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) chapters 169 and 419A. Additionally, ORS 419B.010 and 015 mandates staff in detention facilities to report suspected abuse to Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) or to the local office of the Department of Human Services (DHS), regardless of where the abuse occurred. Oregon juvenile detention facilities are also governed through Oregon Detention Guidelines developed through Youth Development Oregon.
- It is imperative that facilities take allegations of abuse seriously and ensure that investigations are handled appropriately. Local LEAs are thoroughly trained to investigate child abuse and are familiar with the requirements of juvenile detention facilities. Each of the county juvenile detention facilities in Oregon have a designated LEA which conducts investigations, which can respond to reports without delay.
- HB 4086, passed last legislative session, directed DHS to study the scope of child abuse investigations in Oregon. It is my understanding that an advisory committee has been meeting regularly and will present a report and recommendations to the Legislature by September 2025. The committee is comprised of representatives from a variety of key areas affected by abuse investigations, including law enforcement, Oregon Department of Human Services, District Attorneys, county juvenile departments, child advocates, and many others.



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- In 2024, the Juvenile Justice Policy Council was created to develop policy recommendations. The Council includes Legislative participation, and I would encourage this group be able to provide insight and recommendations as well.

My request

I would request that the committee not move forward with SB 915 and that any change in current child abuse investigative requirements within juvenile detention facilities wait until the HB 4086 committee completes their work and submits their report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.