

<b>Date:</b>	<b>March 13, 2025</b>
<b>To:</b>	Co-Chair Evans, Co-Chair Broadman, members of the Public Safety Subcommittee
<b>From:</b>	Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager Tim Dooley
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Support – HB 5004</b>

I am here today in support of the Department of Corrections budget, but specifically in favor of full funding of the community corrections cost study. Because we have many experts in the room who can speak about the good work they do in keeping communities safe and helping those on supervision change their lives, I'll keep my comments fairly high level.

Since 1995, with the enactment of SB 1145, counties have operated the community corrections system in partnership with the state and funded by general fund grant-in-aid dollars. The legislature in that bill codified the state's policy around community corrections, which is that "...counties are in the best position for the management, oversight and administration of local criminal justice matters, and for determining local resource priorities..." and that the state would fund these programs out of general fund dollars.

I think the Legislature got it right 30 years ago. Those closest to the issues are best positioned to run the systems within those domains. Counties are proud to operate community corrections services and do so in a manner that reflects the diversity of this state. Some counties operate these services through their Sheriff's Office, while others do so as a separate county department. Each county makes decisions on a local basis about their priorities in their community and how to allocate their resources.

DOC is required by statute to conduct a study of the actual costs incurred by each county for operating their community corrections system. The 2024 study finds that the cost to counties is \$18.18 per person, per day. The current biennium funds this system at \$13.83 per person per day, and the Governor's budget for 25-27 brings us up to \$15.09 per person per day.

Full funding of this cost study will be \$68 million above the base budget. Two things I want to note, because that is a large dollar amount. The first is that we hope that the April population forecast decreases a bit, which will make that a smaller overall number for both the base

budget and the full funding, and the second is that the state has not fully funded this system to its actual costs since 2006. This is catching up 20 years of disinvestment in this system.

Counties hold their probation and parole systems together with baling wire and duct tape. Many of them have fewer probation officers than they used to, offer fewer programs that we know reduce recidivism, and have done more with less until they've finally had to do less because this funding does not cover costs.

These parole and probation officers do amazing, hard work that is often unrecognized. Every single person that they work with has been adjudicated through the criminal justice system, bringing all that baggage of criminal behavior, mistrust of the system, and often bleak prospects in regular society.

POs must be case managers, social workers, law enforcement officers and get their clients to trust them enough to reorient their thinking and behavior to follow rules and be accountable for their past actions. This is a monumental task and it is one that we ask these officers to do every day – for 50-60 people at a time.

Counties are currently given 76 cents on the dollar of cost. Running a system at a 24% deficit year after year is an impossible situation and yet that's what we're asking counties to do. I want to thank the Governor for recommending a \$20 million increase in funding for community corrections, but even this investment only takes us to 83% the of actual cost.

The majority of counties rely solely on grant-in-aid funding for their community corrections divisions. The few that do supplement this funding with their general fund dollars are looking at substantial budget deficits for this fiscal year and may not be able to continue supporting their departments at a level that they traditionally have.

Probation officers have caseloads that are more complex than ever, and are managing clients with significant addiction issues, mental health issues, housing instability, and the list goes on. They supervise people who have committed serious crimes and require supervision, treatment, and a lot of work to allow them to continue to live in the community.

Counties across the state ask you to fully fund this system so that we can continue to operate a system that is evidence-based, rooted in the community, focused on improving the lives of those under supervision, and maintains the safety of the public.

Thank you for your time.