



CLATSOP COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1190 SE 19th Street • Warrenton, OR 97146 • Mailing: P.O. Box 658 • Astoria, OR 97103

04/03/2025

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen & Wallen, Members of the Committee,

Throughout my law enforcement career, I have seen time and again how our system has failed individuals suffering mental illness. More recently I have seen significant efforts statewide to make improvements and most encouraging is the communication and cooperation among a very diverse group of stakeholders who historically didn't achieve such alignment.

HB 2467 provides clearer standards to evaluate dangerousness to self or others for civil commitment. Countless times I have seen people turned away from the civil commitment system, only to end up arrested, in jail and navigating aid and assist. This phenomenon is well established; one of the great consequences of narrow or ineffective civil commitment laws is a shift of persons with serious mental illness to criminal justice settings.¹

With an eye towards preserving individual liberty and limiting stigma, Oregon's appellate court decisions have significantly narrowed the circumstances in which a person with mental illness can be civilly committed. While I accept these intentions as pure, the results have had the opposite effect desired. Oregon's civil commitment rates have dropped from 53.2/100,000 in 1972 to 9.2 in 2020. Meanwhile between 2000 and 2022, the Oregon State Hospital average daily population for civilly committed persons fell from 52% to 11.3% while the competency to stand trial population increased from 9.4% to 47.2%.² I believe it is far less stigmatizing to receive treatment prior to ending up in the criminal justice system and affords more liberty. Please consider too that civil commitment doesn't need to lead to a stay at the Oregon State Hospital. There are other settings where a sick person can receive care.

I understand how important words are when drafting this bill and perfect agreement between all parties may not be achievable. I do strongly believe as a whole this bill makes substantial progress in moving the ball down the field. Refinements still can be made in

MATTHEW D. PHILLIPS, SHERIFF

Criminal Division
503-325-8635

Support Division
503-325-8635

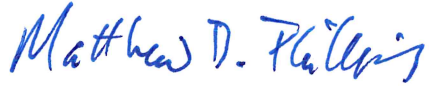
Corrections Division
503-325-8641

Parole & Probation
503-861-2875

Animal Control
503-861-7387

future sessions. I encourage your support of HB 2467 to steer individuals suffering acute mental health symptoms to treatment before they end up in the criminal justice system.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew D. Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matthew D. Phillips, Sheriff

1. Bloom JD, Britton J, Berry, W. The Oregon Court of Appeals and the state civil commitment statute. J Am Acad Psychiatry Law. 2017 mar: 45(1):52-61
2. Bloom JD, Hansen TE, Blekic A. Competency to Stand Trial, Civil Commitment and Oregon State Hospital. J Am Acad Psychiatry Law. 2021 dec: 50:67-73