

Submitter: Cody James  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB602

I'm writing to oppose Senate Bill 602, which hands even more responsibility to the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS)—an agency that can't even handle what's already on its plate. This bill sets up a Nonprofit Organization Advisory Council, a new fund, and a grant database all under DAS's control. Given their track record, this is a recipe for disaster, not progress. Oregon taxpayers and nonprofits deserve better than another layer of bureaucracy run by an agency drowning in lawsuits and dysfunction.

Let's start with the obvious: DAS botched the Workday payroll rollout in December 2022. Over 44,000 state workers got hit with paycheck errors—underpayments, overpayments, you name it. More than a year later, in 2024, they were still "fixing" it, with workers like Victoria Salinas from Oregon State Hospital facing eviction because of their screw-ups. SEIU 503 rallied in April 2024, begging Governor Kotek to step in because DAS couldn't get its act together. Two lawsuits filed in 2023 over these payroll messes are still hanging over their heads, and DAS won't even say how many people got burned—hiding behind "ongoing litigation." This is the agency you want managing a centralized grant database and overseeing nonprofit partnerships?

Then there's the broader incompetence. The 2024 Secretary of State audit flagged DAS for failing to fix Workday's systemic issues, leaving state employees scrambling while managers shrugged. They've got a history of fumbling big projects—remember the Cover Oregon healthcare exchange debacle from 2013? Millions wasted, and DAS was part of that mess too. Now SB 602 wants them to coordinate with every state agency, track grants, and play nice with nonprofits? They can't even pay their own people right—how are they supposed to streamline anything?

The Nonprofit Organization Partnership Fund sounds noble, but it's a blank check for DAS to beg for donations with no clear budget. Who's footing the bill when the contributions dry up? Taxpayers, probably—because DAS isn't exactly a beacon of fiscal responsibility. And this advisory council—15 appointees, mostly political picks—looks like a cushy gig for insiders, not a fix for real problems. Nonprofits don't need more oversight from a failing agency; they need the state to stop tripping over itself.

SB 602 assumes DAS can handle more when they're already a punching bag for lawsuits and a poster child for inefficiency. The Workday nightmare alone proves they can't manage what they've got—let alone a fancy new database or council. This bill doesn't streamline anything; it piles more weight on a broken system. Scrap it, Senator. Focus on making DAS competent before giving them more toys to break.