



Co-Chair Prozanski, Co-Chair Kropf, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3576, which directs the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) to develop a new funding formula for the Behavioral Health Deflection Program. Washington County supports the bill with the caveat that the list of variables included should be permissive rather than prescriptive.

Washington County is fully committed to creating and maintaining pathways to recovery for individuals with substance use disorders. We are proud of our newly established deflection program, made possible by the Legislature's landmark investments in partnerships between local law enforcement and behavioral health providers. We are already starting to see program participants successfully complete the program in the seven months since it became operational. Our deflection program has served nearly fifty individuals with twelve completions to date. Nearly one-third report never having participated in treatment before. These individuals will no longer have a criminal record or need to go to court, and they will be able to move forward on their recovery journey with a solid foundation, stable employment and housing.

While we appreciate the speed with which the Legislature provided resources for county deflection programs, allocating funding based on the Measure 110 formula that was created for behavioral health resource networks (BHRNs) has created significant challenges. Since a formula for BHRNs was already in place, it made sense for the Legislature to use that formula to get money out of the door quickly given the urgency of the substance misuse crisis Oregonians are facing. This formula, however, was not created specifically for deflection programs. The variables that are used to determine the level of resources behavioral health providers need are not the same variables that should be used to identify the level of need for each county deflection program. Deflection is about supporting and creating partnerships within systems. These public safety, behavioral health, and judicial partnerships work together to connect vulnerable individuals to the BHRN resource network and address substance misuse and other concerns leading to criminogenic behavior. Applying the Measure 110 formula to deflection programs has led to a distribution of scarce resources that does not meet the needs of community members in Washington County who are counting on these partners to steer individuals struggling with substance misuse towards recovery.

CJC is already responsible for distributing deflection funds to counties, but they are required to rely on a formula not built for their program. This agency has successfully built formulas for Justice Reinvestment, the Jail-Based Medication for Opioid Use Disorder, and the Specialty Court grant programs among others. We trust that they can do the same for deflection. In our experience, the CJC has been committed to transparency and collaboration with stakeholders

when establishing grant formulas, and we are confident they will be able to maintain these values throughout the process required by HB 3576. In order to ensure that CJC can develop a formula that is in line with best practices and feedback from stakeholders gathered through an inclusive process, we recommend an amendment that clarifies that the list of variables included in the bill is not exhaustive, so that other variables not listed can be considered as well.

With this amendment, we would urge your support for HB 3576.

Thank you for your consideration.

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