

Testimony June 10, 2013 – House Bills 2206 & 3453:

Oregon Legislature: House Rules Committee:

Chair Garrett; Vice-Chair Hicks; Vice-Chair Hoyle; Committee Members,

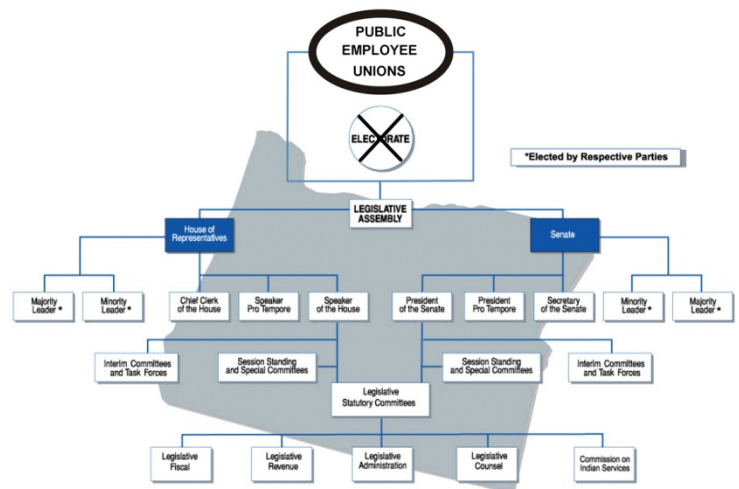
Please accept this testimony with respect to HB 2206 which you are conducting a workshop June 10, 2013 and, HB 3453 (no hearing 6/10/2013) which is similar in many respects but much more onerous.

Both proposed bills move the State of Oregon toward that of a tyrannical government. Neither bill addresses (nor attempts to cure) the underlying problem (disease). Oregon and counties such as Curry of which I am a resident have an addiction to spending other people's money. The solution for an addiction to spending is not more revenue. The solution for an addiction to drugs is not more drugs.

You as elected representatives of "the people" along with public employees charged with "serving the people" appear to believe you are now our "Masters" and we are the "Servants". Not one sentence in either bill refers to the subject of fiscal responsibility which "the people" deal with on a daily basis.



Oregon Legislative Assembly Organizational Chart



http://www.currycountytaxes.com/curry_county_taxes_008.htm

Specific recommendations to fix/cure the underlying problem are listed on the web page link above.

The Spending Addiction:

State Level: The insatiable appetite and addiction to spending other people's money has resulted in the State budget skyrocketing **326** percent from 1991 to 2011 (source – Highlights of the 2009-2011 Oregon Legislatively Adopted Budget) while the state population increased **35** percent during that same period (Census Data: Population Research Center – Portland State University).

Curry County Level: According to Curry County Payroll & Fiscal Year Appropriation Budgets:

- Total county "General Fund" appropriations increased **33** percent during the four-year period for the fiscal years 2007-2008 to 2010-2011, from \$7,593,397 to \$10,079,461.

- Sheriff "General Fund" appropriations increased **39** percent during the four-year period for the fiscal years 2007-2008 to 2010-2011, from \$2,846,600 to \$3,960,401.

Benefit Comparison:

The benefit comparison below was made possible in part with information provided by staff and the Managing Editor of the Curry Coastal Pilot, one of several news publications owned by Western Communications in Bend, Oregon. All benefits listed are paid by the employer.

The county figures are based on the actual July 1, 2011 Curry County Master Payroll totals. Vacation, holiday and sick leave benefits are taken from the Curry County Employee Personnel Manual and/or the applicable collective bargaining agreement. Percent's (%) are approximate and rounded. All calculations were determined by dividing the specific line item by the gross wage.

Curry County Benefits

- Health/dental/optical insurance - \$1,000 plus per month/employee (25%)
- Social Security (FICA) – employer portion (8%)
- Employer Portion – Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) (14%)
- Employer Portion – PERS increase effective July 1, 2013 (4%)
- Employee Portion – Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) (6%)
- Holidays – 12 days paid per year (5%)
- Vacation – 12 days paid per year – First year employed (5%)
- Sick leave – 12 days paid per year (180 day may be accrued) (5%)
- **Total paid benefits as a percent (%) of gross wage (72%)**

Curry Coastal Pilot Benefits

- Health/optical insurance (12%)
- Social Security (FICA) – employer portion (8%)
- Retirement system similar to a 401K – No employer contribution •• (0%)
- Holidays – 6 days paid per year (3%)
- Vacation – 10 days paid per year – First year employed (4%)
- Sick leave – 12 days paid per year (may not be accrued if not used) (5%)
- **Total paid benefits as a percent (%) of gross wage (32%)**

•• At one time the company did contribute to the retirement system but has not done so in many years.
http://www.currycountytaxes.com/curry_county_taxes_003.htm (More on Curry County Benefits)

18 months and we don't know?

December 15, 2011: (Attachment A.): Curry County Sheriff presentation to members of a Citizens' Advisory Committee. Two-page document dated Monday, November 28, 2011 was distributed to all members of the committee. The actual benefit cost used for deputies was **40** percent.

December 27, 2011: (Attachment B.): Curry County Sheriff email; ***“The quick answer for the 40% is what HR gives me for an approx. number, when all benefits are included including FICA, Taxes, Medical etc.”***

March 21, 2013: (Attachment C.): Curry County Sheriff email; ***“...the 40% came from H.R. so I will have to do breakdown as I didn’t question them, as it was their field of expertise (supposedly).”***

Houston, we have a problem! (Tom Hanks; 1995 – Apollo 13)

Believe it or Not!

May 22, 2013: The day following defeat of Law Enforcement Tax Levy ballot measures in Curry and Josephine Counties, commissioners in Curry County did the unthinkable. After nearly five months and thousands of wasted man hours on meeting after meeting after meeting; on PowerPoint presentations and budget scenario A and B, and help from the news media with relentless fear mongering, the commissioners convened with their appointed “Compensation Board” to begin the annual review of Curry County elected officials compensation.

But, for this “public meeting” there was no listing on the county website agenda page where **all** public meetings are listed. The meeting was continued to June 5 and in an email public notice of the meeting citizens were encouraged to submit written comments but, **forbidden** from submitting comments regarding the performance of any “individual” elected official. What happened to the First Amendment?

Worse yet, no audio or video of the two “public meetings” has been posted on the county website agenda page as has been standard practice for years.

Alas, Curry County Commissioners Have the Solution:

June 5, 2013: Just fifteen **(15) days** after defeat of Measure 8-71 Curry County commissioners agreed to place a **“3% Sales Tax”** measure on the ballot and hold a “special election” in September at taxpayer expense, of course.

Members of the Rules Committee:

Bad governance should not be rewarded. Government under an oligarchy or dictatorship is NOT the solution. Takeover of all or part of a municipality by decree or proclamation by an appointed dictator is NOT the solution. Please do NOT pass HB 2206 or HB 3453 out of your committee.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Thomas Huxley
Harbor, Oregon