



## ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: June 18, 2013

TO: Joint Committee on Ways and Means SubCommittee on Human Services

RE: SB 457-A, relating to health care

Committee Members:

The Lane County Board of Commissioners has reviewed SB 457A and is in support of this measure. We are aware of the -5 amendment to the bill and ask that you schedule a work session for this bill in order to further improve this piece of legislation.

SB 457A, together with the -5 amendment would provide fiscal relief for escalating health care costs at the Lane County jail by ensuring that insurance coverage continues for those inmates, whether awaiting trial or already sentenced, who have status as an insured person through a current policy that is not in arrears.

Lane County operates a jail that serves all of Lane County. While much has been made of the deteriorating status of public safety in Lane County due to fiscal stresses related to federal forest policy, the operation of the jail and the maximization of available beds has been a continual priority for the Board of Commissioners. One of the major drivers of the costs of a jail is health care. Our costs over the past several years for health care have ranged between \$2M to \$3M annually, and in spite of structural efficiencies we have made, these costs continue to climb.

Those individuals arrested and housed in county jails are not typically the healthiest of individuals. It is very often the case that these people are intoxicated when arrested, and are chronic users of drugs and/or alcohol. We regularly transport people to the local hospital's emergency room for care that we cannot provide within our jail.

Without SB 457A, and the -5 amendment, those costs are paid for by the taxpayers of Lane County even if the individual has current insurance in good standing.

Please get this bill to the full Committee on Ways and Means. Local taxpayers should not have to bear this cost, and it is an insult to them that insurance companies continue to reap a premium without being on the hook for any services provided post-arrest.

SUBMITTED BY ALEX CUYLER, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER