

HB 3304

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Thank you Chair Garrett and members of the committee for letting me speak today. Ghandi once said: "Good government is no substitute for self-government". I urge the committee to respect this wisdom, because HB 3304 takes a different direction.

In my hands I hold a technological masterpiece that keeps getting better every year, an Amazon Kindle. When I turn it on, you can hear the distant sound of giant printing presses being turned into scrap metal and the publishing empires which once dominated the literary community crumbling into rubble. This device makes it possible for anybody literate to publish and for ideas to be communicated more widely and more effectively than ever. In the midst of this, HB 3304 seeks to re-create the Egyptian priesthood of masters of the arcane, guardians of the secret writings of elections law in Oregon. We don't need a select group of experts to run things for the

counties. If Oregon election law has become too obscure for intelligent people of good will to comprehend without central control, time has come to simplify and reduce this excess of government. “Elections Law for Dummies” hasn’t been written for Oregon yet, but the efforts of the government would be much spent supporting the existing county clerks than taking power from the electorate. We need to stop building pyramids of laws in this river valley in tribute to the lawgivers.

Oregon has a home brew culture based a love for doing things better ourselves. HB 3304 seeks to take away our experimentation and our justifiable pride of getting things right our way and replace it with appointments. Instead of local persons of good character who understand the community, we will have the select of a small group of Salem insiders imposing their will. This is a bad idea for Multnomah County and a disaster for Harney County. Our culture is not based on industrialization of ideas, but free expression of the residents. This law would impose Schludwiller on the state with an inflexible tastelessness. “Where are you going with all that law from California?”

Experience tells us that HB 3304 is an invitation to corruption. Instead of having to buy the sympathy of voters in a dozen counties, HB 3304 would require the next Enron or Solyndra to buy the complicity of three tools and the acquiescence two dupes to appoint a slate of county clerks. Although the law spells out in detail how county clerks are to be censured by the commission for wrongdoing, it is distressingly vague about correcting malfeasance by the commission itself. In the time it takes to sort out the mischief caused by this corruption, Oregon can acquire a reputation for dirt so toxic as to chase off every major business from the state. There isn't enough clean water in the Columbia watershed to wash out that stain and HB 3304 makes it practically inevitable.

In another technological breakthrough, researchers at Lockheed Martin have developed a filter that desalinates with 1% of the energy and 0.2% of the bulk of current reverse osmosis systems. Although this should be shouted to ring the dome above, I'll say this in conversational tones. Oregon's near monopoly on fresh water just took a major hit. One

of our chief attractions to business just went away.  
Playing games with business just now is a bad plan.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/13/us-usa-desalination-idUSBRE92C05720130313>

<http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2013/03/16/lockhead-martin-throws-more-dirt-of-mathus-grave/>

HB 3304 stands firmly planted in the intersection of technology, culture and history, looking the wrong way and nailing the county's feet to the ground. HB 3304 is a disaster waiting to happen to Oregon.