



## ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: February 2, 2015  
TO: House Committee on Rules  
RE: HB 2177, relating to elections

Chair Hoyle and Committee Members:

Prior to the introduction of HB 2177, the Board of Commissioners was aware that the Secretary of State's office would be pursuing legislation to automatically tie voter registration to the gaining of an Oregon driver's license. In their consideration of this measure, the discussion focused primarily on the fiscal impact of such a measure on the budget of the county's Elections Division. Thus, they took a position to support the concept "only if funded".

Obviously, HB 2177 is not a budget bill. Moreover, measure is being heard on the first day of the Legislative Assembly so it is impossible to address the question of adequate funding for this measure at this point in time, other to note that both the Governor's Recommended Budget and the Co-Chair's "Framework" document do not identify a mechanism for addressing the additional costs that both state and local agencies will incur as a result of this policy question.

Lane County makes two points with respect to the funding question that remains:

- The County's Election Division is 100% funded by County General Fund. It is well understood that this fund has experienced large declines due to the sun setting of the federal Secure Rural Schools Act. The Secretary of State's Audit Division has twice recognized the degree to which the elimination of this funding has impacted the County, and has identified it as one of the 8-9 counties statewide it considers worthy of "monitoring" due to the likelihood for fiscal distress. In that 65% of the general fund is used to fund public safety services in Lane County, any policy passed at the state level to require commitments to non-public safety services is concerning. We note there is less than 24-7 coverage by Lane County Deputies on county roads as of this hearing.
- The 2009 Final Report from the Governor's Task Force on Federal Forest Payments and County Services recommended a host of concepts that would serve to mitigate the downturn in federal forest revenues. The report included Recommendation #38: "The state should, within the next four fiscal years, pick up the cost of elections for statewide offices and statewide ballot measures now borne by counties in primary and general elections". In spite of several attempts to pass such a law through the Rules Committee as a stand-alone measure or an amendment to an existing bill, that dynamic still exists.

Lane County urges a statement by the Rules Committee, as it is able, to address how this measure will be funded.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY