



ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: April 15, 2015
TO: House Committee on Judiciary
RE: HB 2936, relating to substance abuse treatment

Chair Barker and Committee Members:

Lane County is in support of HB 2936. This measure will ensure that additional communities in Oregon are served by sobering centers, and will allow police agencies additional options as they deal with inebriated individuals.

We provide financial support to the Buckley House, a sobering center operated by Willamette Family Treatment in Eugene. We are joined in that financial commitment to ensuring the on-going presence of this service by the cities of Eugene and Springfield, and the local PeaceHealth hospital. Notably, in 2014, the Oregon legislature joined our partnership through the additional commitment of \$45,000.

During our report back to the Legislature in December, 2014 on their investment, we noted:

- Sobering is but one element of a suite of services we are terming “crisis array”. These services share a common feature of bringing mental and behavioral health tools to a closer alignment and better utilization for police agencies. We believe police could use these tools in particular with populations that are involved with chronic overuse of police services, jails, and emergency rooms in local communities.
- Crisis array services will save local resources and produce better outcomes, but are probably not eligible for funding dedicated for “justice re-investment”. HB 3194 (2013) was designed to reduce the utilization of the state prison system. Crisis array services will have more of an impact on resources being spent on jails and hospital emergency departments.
- The role of the state should be to assist local communities in implementing proven and effective crisis array services. State resources can best be spent on ensuring that a menu of such services is available to local communities over time. While grant and one-time funding is obviously appreciated, these programs take consistent funding to develop the physical and human resources infrastructure to ensure sustainable change.

We believe that sobering centers are an essential element of the intersection between behavioral health and criminal justice services. Without HB 2936 it will be much harder for many communities to justify investing in this intersection due to the absence of concrete policy language that will serve to protect local policing agencies. HB 2936 will provide police agencies with the equivalent protection from liability that they are currently afforded under ORS 430.401 by adding sobering facilities to that statute.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED