

**UMATILLA COUNTY COMMISSIONER GEORGE MURDOCK**

Testimony to the Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Public  
Safety - HB 5013  
3/15/17

Co-Chairs and Members of the Subcommittee – My name is George Murdock. I'm a Umatilla County Commissioner and also here to represent the Association of Oregon Counties.

I would like to extend AOC's appreciation to Chief Justice Balmer and his fellow judges who work in circuit courts across Oregon. I know that commissioners and other county elected officials enjoy a strong working relationship with judges in their district as well as staff with the judicial department. A strong public safety system relies on those key relationships between judges, district attorneys, sheriffs, and county commissioners.

AOC has helped lead efforts on funding for justice reinvestment and continues to push those efforts here in the capitol. In each of our counties, we are working to help avoid prison growth by implementing successful reentry, recidivism reduction, and treatment programs for offenders. These programs, including specialty courts, have been strongly supported by judges across the state, thus continuing our strong public safety system.

At AOC, I have the pleasure of serving as chair of the Court Facilities Task Force, which was convened as a joint project between counties and the judicial department. Over the past few sessions, we have been able to bring counties together to prioritize state funding requests for new courthouse replacement projects as well as health and safety improvement projects.

I want to thank OJD's Phil Lemman and David Moon who have been an integral piece to this task force and the information and knowledge they bring to make this an effective partnership.

Umatilla County was built in the 1950s as a bomb shelter and will be standing long after I am not able to, so we are not a part of these discussions. But hopefully that shows you how coordinated our counties are in this effort.

AOC supports the efforts of all the counties who have appeared before you today requesting funding for new courthouse projects.

In our process, we have attempted to make sure counties seeking assistance have had a thorough review of how ready they are at the local level to go through with their project. We also worked with you and OJD to develop a prioritized list for courthouses considering replacement in the next decade.

While some of Oregon's courthouses are historic landmarks dating back well over a century, many of them require attention. Having a systematic program in place to provide for those improvements has been a much needed blessing to our counties. Thank you to the state and the judicial department for your investment in our county courthouses.

We look forward to continuing our partnership and work together.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today.