



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 13, 2019
TO: Honorable Jennifer Williamson, Chair of the House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Michael Kron, Special Counsel to the Attorney General
SUBJECT: House Bill 2431 – Accountability for Public Records Law Compliance

This testimony is presented in support of House Bill 2431.

Background

Among other responsibilities, the Public Records Advocate is tasked with studying and reporting on the state of the Oregon Public Records law. Prior attempts to assess basic facts such as how quickly and completely public bodies respond to requests have had to rely primarily on anecdote, because reliable data is not readily available. As a result, there are significant gaps in our understanding of how well the Oregon Public Records Law is working.

Concept

HB 2431 requires state agencies to report basic information about their compliance with public records requests to the Advocate. This data, in turn, will enable the Advocate to develop a much clearer picture of how the law is actually working on the ground. This should inform policy prescriptions that are based on a factual understanding of any shortcomings in the existing laws.

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