



JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

Board of Commissioners

Rick Dyer (541) 774-6118
Bob Strosser (541) 774-6119
Colleen Roberts (541) 774-6117
Fax: (541) 774-6705

10 South Oakdale, Room 214
Medford, Oregon 97501

April 2, 2019

Representative Jeff Barker, Chair
Representative Greg Barreto, Vice-Chair
Representative Janelle Bynum, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor
Oregon State Capitol
hbl.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: Opposition to House Bill 2786

Dear Chair Barker, Vice-Chair Barreto, Vice-Chair Bynum, and Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor:

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, I am writing to let you know that Jackson County opposes the provisions of House Bill (HB) 2786 which qualifies District Attorneys and Deputy District Attorneys as police officers for the purposes of the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS). In just the first year, Jackson County will be responsible for paying PERS an additional \$88,094.32 from our General Fund for the costs associated with our Deputy District Attorneys qualifying as police officers, compared to the current cost of PERS for those employees. The additional cost of \$88,094.32 in just one year does not include the added financial impact to Jackson County of the additional unaccrued actuarial liability if the Deputy District Attorneys were to qualify as police officers for the purpose of PERS, as compared to the current unaccrued actuarial liability for those employees.

For Jackson County, \$88,094.32 in additional General Fund costs is about the equivalent of one full-time Deputy District Attorney position in our District Attorney's Office. Without an additional source of revenue to cover the expense of implementing HB 2786, Jackson County will have to consider how to reduce other expenditures to match the revenue available in our General Fund to pay for the expenses of the District Attorney's Office. Such reductions could have a negative impact on public safety in our County.

Additionally, qualifying Deputy District Attorneys as police officers for the purposes of PERS could have unintended consequences for public safety in Jackson County and throughout the State. One of the impacts of a position being qualified as a police officer for PERS is the ability of a person, so qualified, to retire and take the PERS benefit earlier than as compared to a person who is not qualified as a police officer. As such, Jackson County and other counties, will be losing to retirement the most experienced prosecutors, who generally handle the most complex cases, significantly sooner than we otherwise would.

From previously submitted testimony, it appears that the stress related to serving as a Deputy District Attorney is suggested as leading to high turnover and loss of tenure. Thus, HB 2786 appears to be suggested as a way to incentivize Deputy District Attorneys to remain in their positions despite that stress. For Jackson County, we have not seen a high turnover rate in the Deputy District Attorney position for any reason, let alone people leaving the profession of prosecution due to the stress of the position. In recent years, people have left the position in Jackson County for reasons as diverse as being elected as a Circuit Court Judge, taking a higher paying position as a prosecutor in a different agency, or for personal reasons.

Chair Barker, Vice-Chair Barreto, Vice-Chair Bynum,
Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor
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As such, Jackson County does not see the need for HB 2786 as a necessary solution to our nonexistent issue of stress-related resignations.

Therefore, due to the fiscal impact, the potential impacts to public safety in Jackson County, and what appears to be, for our County, the nonexistent need to further incentivize people to remain as Deputy District Attorneys, Jackson County opposes HB 2786. Thank you for your time considering this matter.

Sincerely,

JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Strosser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "B".

Bob Strosser
Chair

:jb/lf