



April 24, 2019

Chair Keny-Guyer, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing:

Re: Washington County Opposes SB 543

Washington County's Board of Commissioners have carefully considered SB 543 and the proposed formation of a children's service district to serve our growing communities. But they identified a number of questions and concerns that prevent our County from supporting the bill.

Specifically, the concerns of our 5-member Board of Commissioners center over three areas:

- **SB 543 lacks both detail and definition.** Under ORS 195 cities can choose to be served by a special service district, but county governments cannot. So it is unclear how large, or how small, a children's district needs to be; the programs or services that would be provided; or the number of children to be served by a newly-created district.
- **SB 543 would likely burden local school districts.** While school districts are not specifically impacted by the taxing authority proposed by a new children's service district, it is clear that school buses, facilities and personnel will be needed to safely transport, shelter and supervise children outside normal school hours.
- **SB 543 would directly impact current government services.** Creating a new and additional taxing authority to finance a children's service district would compress local property tax levies dedicated to other voter-approved programs and services.

Washington County currently relies on 5-year operating levies to fund our Public Safety and Cooperative Library Services. Both of these levies received overwhelming support from voters when they were renewed in 2016. Yet property tax revenues derived from these levies would be the first to be impacted by the formation of a new taxing district in our County.

Local option levy compression has already resulted in the loss of \$472,316 to these two levies in the current (2018-19) fiscal year, erasing \$309,957 from our public safety and victims assistance programs, and an additional \$162,359 from our county library services system. Other local jurisdictions will face similar competing demands when their operating levies are presented to their voters, including Metro, Tualatin Fire and Rescue, and the City of Tigard.

For these reasons, Washington County's Board of Commissioners opposes passage of SB 543, and urges members of this Human Services and Housing Committee to oppose it as well.

For additional information or clarification, please contact

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