
DATE: May 7th, 2019
TO: Senate Judiciary Committee
FROM: Taylor Steenblock, Multnomah County
RE: HB 3289 A

Chair Williamson and members of the committee; my name is Taylor Steenblock with Multnomah County Government Relations. I am here today to testify in support of HB 3289 A. We are particularly supportive of Section 2, which repeals ORS 169.530-540.

Multnomah County contracts with the US Marshals Service to house Federal inmates in the County's local correctional facilities under these statutes. This contractual relationship exists as a necessary byproduct of the obligations imposed on counties by ORS §§ 169.530-540. Our statutory duty to accept all federal prisoners committed to the physical custody of Multnomah County puts a strain on corrections and medical resources. Currently, there is no minimum or maximum number of inmates that we can be required to receive. We must take what we are given by the federal government, and this makes resource allocation and contract negotiation difficult for the county.

In September of last year, an increase of 25 federal inmates pushed our local jail population into a situation where the County was forced into a population emergency. As a result, the Sheriff had to matrix release inmates who were awaiting trial and would have otherwise remained in custody. This poses a potential public safety risk.

Federal inmates currently account for between seven to ten percent of our inmates, occupying 80-140 jail beds. While they are housed in our jails, federal inmates receive all the same services as other inmates including medical services and supervision. The average length of stay for an inmate who is booked by local law enforcement is 11-14 days, thanks to the County's pretrial efforts. Conversely, Federal inmates stay on average 40 to 70 days.

Repealing ORS 169.530 and its companion statute 169.540 will allow Counties that wish to enter into contracts with the Federal government to have more control over the number, and type of inmates we receive, while at the same time supporting County efforts to negotiate more favorable reimbursement rates and terms.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to be a resource if you have any questions.