



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Policy Director
In Support of HB 3224
Senate Judiciary Committee
May 22, 2019**

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon¹ supports HB 3224, which would require Oregon district attorneys to create and publish policies for the core functions of their office and make them available to the public.

Policies that guide the work in district attorneys' (DA) offices matter. The choices that individual DAs make about how their offices are run and how their prosecutors operate profoundly impact the lives of Oregonians.

The policies and practices of DAs can be the difference between whether or not crime victims get access to critical services that help them rebuild their lives, whether or not young people are held accountable in a way that protects future life-possibilities, whether people of color are treated fairly, or whether children keep contact and connection with their parents.

There is currently no requirement in Oregon that DA offices have publicly available policies that create reasonable transparency about the core functions of their office. Without meaningful and public policies and guidelines, unchecked prosecutorial discretion can lead to unequal treatment, rogue prosecutors, confusion for victims and defendants, and the inability of Oregonians to understand and effectively question what's happening in our justice system.

The formal or informal policies that guide prosecutorial practices of DA offices shouldn't be a mystery. This legislation requires every district attorney to create policies for the core functions of their office and make them available to the public. Oregonians deserves greater transparency from the most powerful actors in our criminal justice system.

¹ The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 45,000 members and supporters statewide.

For these reasons, the ACLU of Oregon urges you to support HB 3224. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.