

Senate Bill 1013



Redefining 'Aggravated Murder'

While Oregonians still debate whether the death penalty is appropriate or a deterrent, there is no debate that prosecuting death penalty cases and maintaining death row are expensive. One obvious and immediate solution is to redefine what cases qualify for death penalty prosecutions.

Senate Bill 1013 represents a carefully considered measure to narrow the definition of "aggravated murder," the current standard for the death penalty in Oregon. The new definition would limit death penalty prosecutions to premeditated, criminal homicides of two or more people with the intent of coercing a civilian population, influencing governmental policy or affecting government conduct through destruction of property, kidnapping or aircraft piracy.

The bill brought to the Senate floor contains three amendments to the proposed new definition of aggravated murder:

- 1 A murder committed while in custody or a repeat homicide.
- 2 Retains current definition related to murder of a person under the age of 14.
- 4 Clarifies that attempted aggravated murder and attempt of any degree of murder would be Class A felonies.

SB 1013 reclassifies crimes no longer included in the definition of aggravated murder as Murder in the First Degree. The measure removes "future dangerousness" as a factor for jury consideration of a death sentence.

Oregon spends an estimated \$29 million per year to prosecute and defend capital crime defendants.

That doesn't include costs for local police, county jails, the OSP and incarceration.

Capital trials can cost more than twice as much as a single trial for a murder case

Lewis & Clark Law Review found the AG spent up to \$4 million on automatic appeals

70% of all death penalty cases are filed in five Oregon counties

