



ACLU of Oregon Urges a Yes Vote on HB 3224A¹ District Attorney Transparency

The Problem: Prosecutors in Oregon operate without adequate transparency.

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 Solution: Require the development of policies, then make them public.

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.

The ACLU of Oregon² urges you to support HB 3224A.

From the Desk of
Senator Dennis Linthicum

¹ Note that HB 3224A was amended in the Senate Judiciary Committee with various improvements based on feedback from stakeholders.

² 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.