



**March 10, 2020**

*RE: HB 2177*

Chair Power, Vice Chair Wallan, & Members of the Committee:

Washington County aims to be a strong and collaborative partner with the State in the pursuit of advancing justice. Supporting a robust justice system allows our richly diverse community to be served meaningfully, professionally and equitably. However, imposing economic barriers that disproportionately impact larger counties, such as Washington County, undermines the ability to provide swift and appropriate response. If passed as drafted, House Bill 2177 would pay for important technology improvements to the state court system, which Washington County agrees are critical investments. However, the bill proposes to pay for those improvements by imposing a fee on medium and large counties based on the number of felony and misdemeanor cases filed by the district attorney. So, in essence, the state proposes to tax counties to pay for an improvement to a state function based on the number of filings by another state actor (the district attorney).

If passed as drafted, House Bill 2177 would amount to approximately a \$900,000 reduction in funding for court services at Washington County. At a time when budgets are tight due to COVID-19, this loss of funding would undermine the County's ability to provide much needed court services that promote access to justice for all members of our community. For example, this \$900,000 reduction could mean a decrease in specialty courts which are staff and resource intensive. Washington County utilizes a drug court (juvenile and adult), veterans treatment court and mental health court, to mention a few. These specialty courts allow our justice system to provide the needed flexibility, attention, and thoughtfulness required to promote justice.

As one of the most diverse counties in the state of Oregon, we hope to partner with the state and community members to ensure a more just future for all Oregonians. We greatly appreciate your attention to this pressing matter and urge you to oppose House Bill 2177.

Respectfully,

Jagjit Nagra, Government Relations Manager

