



Matthew Ellis, District Attorney  
Sally Carpenter, Senior Deputy District Attorney  
Caleb Berthelsen, Deputy District Attorney  
Danielle DeCant, Deputy District Attorney  
Kara Davis, Special Deputy District Attorney  
511 Washington St., Ste. 304 • The Dalles, OR 97058  
p: [541] 506-2680 • f: [541] 506-2681 • [www.co.wasco.or.us](http://www.co.wasco.or.us)

Chair Kropf and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I want to offer my support for HB 2308, the bill you will hear more about on Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, that eliminates the two-tier system of pay for Elected District Attorneys. Like judges and public defenders, Elected District Attorney compensation is determined by the State. However, unlike the judges and public defenders, District Attorneys are currently paid differently based on the population of their county. This is not in law, but rather a system relied on by the Dept. of Administrative Services where District Attorneys that represent counties with more than 100,000 people are paid more than those in smaller, largely rural and valley counties. This contributes to a \$21,000+ annual pay gap between District Attorneys across Oregon.

I am elected in Wasco County, with a population of around 27,000, placing me in the lower salary tier. As an elected District Attorney in a mid-size county, my role includes duties that are handled by Deputy District Attorneys in larger counties as well as my role as Administrator of the District Attorney's Office. I handle a case load, make frequent court appearances, go to crime scenes and autopsies when necessary, and am on call for law enforcement. Many of my colleagues in larger counties have Deputy DAs and Senior Deputy DAs to handle these duties.

To make up some of the discrepancy, Wasco County pays me a stipend of \$16,000/year, which still falls short of the difference between the two tiers. In addition, Wasco County lies in the Columbia River Gorge, home prices and the cost of living has increased substantially, and is more in line with the costs in the larger populated areas of Oregon.

Please eliminate the two-tiers for District Attorneys and pass HB 2308.

Respectfully,

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Matthew Ellis  
Wasco County District Attorney