

From: Les Ruark leswruark@gmail.com

Subject: Corrected addressed send of: The back door amending of SB 1576.

Date: February 10, 2024 at 3:11 PM

To: Sen.FloydProzanski@oregonlegislature.gov, Sen.KimThatcher@oregonlegislature.gov, Sen Gelser Blouin sen.saragelser@oregonlegislature.gov, sen.DennisLinthicum@oregonlegislature.gov, sen.jamesmanning@oregonlegislature.gov

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LR

The "back door" effort to legislate
begun Friday.

10 February 2024

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senator Kim Thatcher, Vice-Chair
Senators Sara Gelser Blouin, Dennis Linthicum and James Manning
Senate Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon

Re: the proposed amendment to SB 1576 (identified as -4 or LC 228)

Chair Prozanski; Vice-Chair Thatcher; Senators Gelser Blouin, Linthicum and Manning:

The above referenced amendment is (or certainly depicts, anyways) one of the most "back door efforts" of legislating I've seen in all my fifty some years of watching the legislature as I have, first as a staffer there (albeit, now, back away) and since (for some forty years) as simply one holding a longstanding interest in (and involvement with) all things public records and open meetings. It is offensive. It reeks of closed door politics. And both of those aspects of it absolutely unnecessarily so.

It is truly sad, disappointing, and to a certain extent genuinely surprising, Gilliam county Judge Campbell and Commissioner Shannon are, apparently, choosing to take this road to respond to the legal challenge which was just this past week placed before the Gilliam County Court in this matter—the governing body which of course they are two of the three members of.

I have not been a part of that particular legal action; I am, tho, certainly aware of it.

To boot, as it's turning out, I'd almost bet you bottom dollar there's certainly not been the most up front use of, or probably even the most proper use of, the county's contracted-out county counsel(s) in this instance—assuming they've even been involved with it (as, really, they should be if they haven't).

You should know, chair Prozanski and committee members: had the county court (Judge Campbell, Commissioner Shannon and Commissioner Watkins) simply slowed down during the last twelve months (as they easily enough could have done and I believe still gotten somewheres with their intent) and made the effort locally to take directly to the county's *populace as a whole* (either as a binding vote or simply an advisory one) the issue, the *decision*, of separating both juvenile and probate duty from the judge's position (the subsequent long lasting impact that would have to the structure of government in the county), before so assertively taking it upon themselves *alone* to make that decision, they would today quite likely possess *far* more credibility and political capital to be expending and so behind-the-scenes attempting to wield in Salem—*far* more.

The state of affairs—of democracy—in Gilliam County this week has now reached a level truly mirroring that which we are witnessing at the national level: almost, if not in fact, total disarray.

The action of those pursuing this amendment (-4, LC 228) and as closed door about it as that's happening (it wasn't even, as it easily enough could have been, informally mentioned at last week's county court meeting) definitely ratchets up the levels of discontent and, now, discord in this entire matter—definitely.

Before you were to actually be drug into all of the aforementioned discontent and discord, I respectfully suggest you should think very carefully about whether it is actually proper or prudent for the senate judiciary committee—today, this session—to be so quickly, seemingly discreetly, certainly with little if any equitable or actual notice of it given to the populace as a whole of Gilliam county, signing off on this proposed amendment.

Instead, the back door-attempted statutory change and use of an emergency clause proposed to be approved courtesy of -4 LC 228 should be quickly quashed and left a matter much more appropriately, forthrightly, and openly, taken up by the 2025 long session of the Legislature—not the current session.

Sincerely,

Les

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