

11 February 2023

Senate Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon

Chair Floyd Prozanski
Vice-chair Kim Thatcher
Member Senators Sara Gelsler Blouin, Dennis Linthicum and James Manning

We the participants in the Frontier Justice PAC, appreciate the efforts to solve the problems with ORS 111.055 and 111.075 with the proposed amendment (-4) to SB 1576. We understand the belief this should be a local decision that can remove a county from the list in ORS 111.055 as opposed to it being a legislative action as it is now. There is a time for this, but it isn't now! THIS NOT AN EMERGENCY! We see no reason for this -4 amendment to be an addition to SB 1576! This admendmment does nothing but take away the people of these counties voice and add cost to the State Circuit Courts budget.

There are issues to the simplification of what is being proposed. Morrow County and Gilliam County are two recent examples that bring this to the forefront,

- Morrow County was not one of the Probate counties in ORS 111.055, but the Judge did have Juvenile judicial duties. A candidate filed and campaigned for the Judge position, during the campaign the acting Court, by a 2-1 count, voted to change from a Court to a Board of Commissioners. This action suddenly turned a 6 year term Judge seat on a County Court to a 4 year term Commissioner seat on a County BOC.
- Gilliam County, individuals have filed and are campaigning for a Judge seat and its term length, only to find that the Court is attempting to change to a Board of Commissioners creating a 4 year seat. After hours of testimony against the move, only legal action using the existing ORS 111.055 language by the Fontier Justice PAC, slowed them down. The actions of 3 people, has created total chaos in Gilliam County.

If the Judiciary Committee is remotely considering approval of the -4 amendment, our ask of you is to add additional language to the amendment that would require a “**referral to voters before transfer**”. This would prevent a change in a county government structure without the knowledge of the constituents. It also addresses any circumstance

where 2 of the 3 Court members can change a County's government structure simply because they don't like a newly elected Judge or a candidate running for the position.

We believe this would only require a small sentence added to ORS 111.055 Section 1, the *-4 amendment creating a subsection (3)*.

- (3) Notwithstanding subsections (1) and (2) of this section, the county court of Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Sherman or Wheeler County may approve a transfer, ***upon an approved referral of the voters***, of the probate jurisdiction, authority, powers, functions and duties of the county court to the circuit courts and the judges thereof, and set an effective date of the transfer.

The change of a government structure is a decision to be made within a County border, but only when the entire electorate is involved!

I thank you for your time and the service you provide to the people of the State of Oregon!

Frontier Justice
Citizens of Gilliam County