

Submitter: Leah Watkins
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1576

February 12, 2024

Support in favor - Written Testimony before the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Regarding Senate Bill 1576-4 Amendment

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 1576-4. I am submitting written testimony in support of this amendment.

I am currently a Gilliam County Commissioner, and more recently a candidate for Gilliam County Judge. ORS 111.055 and ORS 111.075 limits the ability of only six counties to choose their form of government, and limits the voters of the county to determine how they will be governed.

The choice of whether a county remains a County Court or changes to a Board of Commissioners, is not obtainable to our citizens, without this legislative change. The Legislators in 1973 felt it important to let the other 30 counties have the freedom to relinquish those judicial duties. It is my understanding at the time the bill 111.055 was passed that Circuit Court was not interested in serving these smaller and more rural counties. It is my opinion that the bill intended to protect the authority and power of those counties left with Probate jurisdiction and their ability to perform those duties, and not necessarily to restrict counties from determining their own form of government which statute 111.055 does.

Respectfully,

Leah Watkins
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