



LANE COUNTY

LANE COUNTY OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL / PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING. / 125 EAST 8TH AVE. / EUGENE, OR 97401
541-682-4442 / FAX 541-682-3803 / www.lanecounty.org

Monday, February 2, 2026

Explanation of Rob Bovett, Lane County Counsel
before the
Senate Judiciary Committee
relating to the purpose and function of
Senate Bill 1583

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and
Senators Broadman, Gelser Blouin, Manning, and McLane,

For the record, I am Rob Bovett, County Counsel for Lane County, Oregon. I have been involved in drug policy at local, state, national, and international levels for a few decades, and currently teach Drug Law and Policy at Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland. My career has focused heavily on creating and implementing diversionary programs in our justice system for people suffering from addiction or behavioral health issues.

We currently have a **golden opportunity to address our ongoing addiction crisis** fueled by synthetic drugs like meth and fentanyl. The purity and potency of these highly addictive drugs is down all across our nation, driven by effective international precursor controls. This can be seen in many sets of data – most strikingly in overdose deaths. See “Shock” in Fentanyl Supply Leads to Dramatic Drop in Deaths *Psychology Today* (1/14/26).

A golden opportunity like this does not come along very often. The last time we experienced a similar situation was in the late 2000’s after we had successfully negotiated and put into place effective international precursor controls.

As one of my drug policy colleagues correctly noted in a recent essay in *The Atlantic* about this recent development, when “supply dries up, some people get off drugs; now is a great time to help them” – if “we want to lock in the unexpected windfall from the drought, now is the time to focus on getting people clean.” The Real Reason for the Drop in Fentanyl Overdoses *The Atlantic* (1/20/26).

The action we should take is clear, as it was in the late 2000’s. We should do so again. Not next year – but now, while the opportunity is prime. Generally speaking, there are six dials we can adjust in the drug policy world to impact overall positive outcomes and address changing circumstances: Prevention, enforcement, treatment, recovery support, harm reduction, and community harm reduction. In circumstances like the present, where purity and potency are plunging, **we should dramatically turn up the dials for treatment and recovery support – especially evidence-based peer recovery support.**

In short, we should seize the day.

What is standing in our way?

Sometimes a headline sums it up: **‘Enough is enough’: Oregon’s Secretary of State demands accountability for the state’s failed addiction response** *The Oregonian* (12/17/25). See Oregon Secretary of State Audit Report 2025-29 (12/17/25).

Senate Bill 1583 meets this moment. The bill directly addresses the underlying problems correctly pointed out by our Secretary of State. Senate Bill 1583:

- Requires that Behavioral Health Resource Network (BHRN) funding go to prevention, enforcement, treatment, recovery support, harm reduction, and community harm reduction programs that **actually work**.
- Ensures **local control**, because resources and needs vary from county to county. A famous Oregon county judge once said “if you’ve seen one Oregon county, you’ve seen one Oregon county.” She was – and remains – absolutely correct.
- Provides **accountability** through a state committee of a state agency that is already trusted and has extensive experience giving grants and holding grantees accountable.

The bill also allows BHRN funding to be used for those deflection programs enabled by 2024 House Bill 4002 that are effective and accountable – such as the those operated by Lane and Marion Counties, which have exceeded our expectations.

A noted Oregon addiction doctor once said during my Drug Law & Policy class that there are a million paths to recovery, and we should lift up and celebrate each and every one. Senate Bill 1583 puts resources behind programs and efforts to help those suffering from meth and fentanyl addiction find recovery, all in an effective and accountable way. In short, the bill meets our current moment.

Finally, I should note that I am not wedded to the specific language in the bill. I am more than open to amendments. But we should embrace this golden opportunity now.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this explanation and presentation before the committee regarding Senate Bill 1583. I am more than happy to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,



Rob Bovett
County Counsel
Lane County, Oregon
Rob.Bovett@lanecountyor.gov