



PRESS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Scott Moore (503) 986-1904
scott.moore@state.or.us

Bills Aim to Bolster Trust in the Criminal Justice System

HB 2704 and HB 2571 clarify laws around recording of police interactions; HB 3399 sets minimum standards for municipal judges

The Oregon House today approved two bills designed to improve trust and credibility between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. The bills update and clarify rules that govern recordings by and of police officers. A third bill will improve accountability in local courts.

House Bill 2571 establishes statewide rules for the use of police body cameras and retention of the footage for police departments that use them.

“This bill doesn’t require the use of body cameras,” says Rep. Jennifer Williamson (D-Portland), who carried HB 2571 on the floor. “But when they are used, this bill creates rules that will protect privacy and provide the kind of transparency the public deserves.”

HB 2571 passed the House 50-9.

House Bill 2704 would update Oregon law by allowing citizens to openly record police officers engaged in official duties while they’re in public. Current law prohibits the audio recording of anyone without first specifically informing the subject of the recording, with some exceptions. HB 2704 would add filming of law enforcement interactions to the list of existing exemptions. It doesn’t allow for interference with police investigations.

HB 2704 passed the House 51-8.

“Credibility and trust are important assets when it comes to protecting the public through police work,” says Rep. Lew Frederick (D-Portland), who sponsored HB 2704. “These bills are about taking the tension down a notch, and rebuilding the bank of credibility and trust.”

House Bill 3399 has two main provisions:

- Requires Justices of the Peace and municipal court judges to hold a law degree or, barring that, complete a course on courts of special jurisdiction from the National Judicial College. The goal is to set a minimum standard of legal training for local judges.
- Require justice and municipal courts to keep an audio recording or written transcript of all misdemeanor or felony proceedings for at least 12 months.

“Oregonians—like people across the country—are looking for increased accountability and transparency in all levels of government, including the criminal justice system,” says Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene). “House Bill 3399 is a step toward improving the public’s trust.”

House Bill 3399 passed 42-16.

All three bills now move to the Senate for consideration.

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