



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2012

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House Untangles Criminal Background Check Process

*Effort Will Make Government More Efficient, Help Volunteers,
Service Providers*

SALEM- Redundancies, inconsistencies, and holes in Oregon's systems of criminal background checks will be no more thanks to a recently passed bill in the Legislature. The Oregon House passed legislation today aimed at making it easier and less costly for volunteers and employees in human service and education positions to track and maintain criminal background checks. The bill, HB 4091, would also attempt to make background checks more usable across agencies.

"Right now we have a tangled web of background check processes," said Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene), the bill's chief sponsor. "This can be a costly procedure for some of our state's lowest paid workers and it adds an unnecessary burden for staff and volunteers at schools and nonprofit organizations. We're making our government leaner and more efficient to best serve the citizens who rely on these services. Today we began to untangle some of the knots in the system."

Rep. Greg Matthews (D-Gresham) is a member of the General Government and Consumer Protection Committee that helped move the bill forward. "We're talking about home care workers, custodians, school employees and hardworking Oregonians in a host of other fields who provide important services. They need to be able to get to work without unnecessary costs and obstacles," said Matthews. "We're working hard to streamline government and make it work best for Oregonians."

"This bill is a result of listening to the people working on the ground and taking action to ensure we deliver the services Oregonians depend on in a more responsive, efficient way," said Rep. Paul Holvey (D-Eugene), Chair of the General Government and Consumer Protection Committee and a bill co-sponsor.

Jan Aho, Executive Director of the Pearl Buck Center in Eugene, a nonprofit that provides services to people with developmental disabilities and their families cheered the bill's passage. "I welcome the day when there is a unified, efficient criminal background checks system in Oregon," Aho said.

HB 4091 will address redundant processes and requirements and clearance incompatibilities between state agencies, and aims to improve the thoroughness of some requirements.

The bill now moves to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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