



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 20th, 2026

Timothy G. Sekerak  
Chief Clerk of the House  
State Capitol Building  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation on HB 4151 A

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

HB 4151A increases penalties for the crime of initiating a false report under certain circumstances. Under the bill, initiating a false report with the intent to cause an enhanced law enforcement response, which recklessly causes serious physical injury or death to another person, is elevated to a Class C felony.

I appreciate the work that went into this bill and the desire to prevent the significant harm that swatting can cause. Nevertheless, I made the decision to vote “no” on the bill because I am not convinced that escalating the punishment for this conduct is the most effective way to prevent this behavior from occurring. During a time of budget constraints and limited criminal justice system capacity, and given the evidence that teens and young adults are most likely to engage in this reckless behavior, I believe that investments in education and training would be a more productive way to prevent this harm.

Each legislative session, the legislature creates new crimes and expands the scope or breadth of pre-existing crimes. Meanwhile, it is rare for the legislature to remove or narrow the scope of existing crimes. The result: a criminal system that tends to get more expansive and expensive with every legislative session. While we should work to ensure our laws reflect changing realities and new harms in our communities, I believe it is time for a broader conversation that seeks to find balance in our criminal laws, rather than a multitude of one-off expansions. In the vast majority of circumstances, I believe investments in preventing harm will be less expensive and better for the community than the costs associated with further heightening penalties for harms that have already occurred.



Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to explain my vote on HB 4151 A.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Willy Chotzen', written in a cursive style.

Representative Willy Chotzen, House District 46 — Southeast Portland