



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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## **Recording grand jury procedures improves transparency**

*SB 505 provides greater accuracy to records and modernizes grand jury process*

SALEM – The Oregon Senate voted today to modernize the 150-year-old record-keeping process for keeping grand jury records, improving transparency and accuracy.

Senate Bill 505 – which passed the Senate on a 21-7 vote – directs district attorneys statewide to ensure grand jury proceedings are recorded using audio electronic recording devices. The district attorneys also must maintain and store copies of the audio recordings. Currently, grand juries across the state have relied upon hand-written notes by a grand jury member. Sen. Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), who carried the bill, currently a municipal prosecutor and former Lane County felony assistant district attorney.

“I have found that no matter how skilled or how experienced the note-taker is, there will be things that are inaccurate or left out inadvertently,” Prozanski said. “As a felony prosecutor in Lane County I wanted my witnesses in front of the grand jury, because I wanted them prepared to be able to testify in public in front of the circuit court. This process opens the grand jury process so that we have a clear and accurate record of what witnesses say during the process, without interpretation. It’s fair to prosecutors and the defense.”

Oregon is one of only two states that does not require electronic audio recording of grand jury proceedings. It improves transparency and assures accuracy in records. Louisiana is the only other state in the country using grand juries that doesn’t require electronic recordings. Recording also is required in the federal system.

“This bill will bring our justice system into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, but it’s about more than that,” Prozanski said. “We’re working on Independence Day right now. July 4 is a beautiful day, and

it's about freedom and liberty. We have a chance to ensure liberty, justice for all and an opportunity to ensure our criminal justice system remains above all reproach.”

Senate Bill 505 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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