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Victims' voices added to local public safety councils

SB 26 requires victim advocacy representation along with law enforcement, courts

SALEM – The Oregon Senate today voted to give victims of crime an important voice on public safety coordinating councils.

Senate Bill 26 – which passed 28-0 on the Senate floor – requires county commissions to appoint providers of victim services to their local public safety coordinating councils. Currently comprised of city, county and state representatives, these local commissions are required to include a police chief, sheriff, judge, district attorney, defense attorney, community corrections director, county commissioner, juvenile department director, health director, representatives of Oregon State Police and Oregon Youth Authority, two city representatives and a member of the public.

“Crime victims have a valuable perspective that needs to be heard in community conversations about public safety,” said Sen. James Manning (D-Eugene), who carried the bill. “This bill ensures that those who work closely with crime victims in their toughest moments can provide a voice of advocacy on their behalf.”

To be appointed in this role, an advocate must represent a non-profit organization that provides services to crime victims. The bill is supported by the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission and Association of Oregon Counties.

SB 26 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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