



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2015

Contact: Caitie Butler

(503) 986-1955

(503) 680-6944

Senate Democrats Burden Public Safety Officials with Ineffective Background Check Bill

Refuse to Increase Funding for Critical Mental Health Services on Party-Line Vote

Salem, OR - Today, Senate Democrats rejected a common-sense bill to invest in community mental health programs across Oregon. SB 763, which would have helped rural counties fund critical mental health services, failed on a party-line vote in the Oregon Senate.

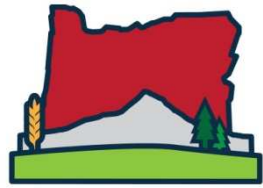
"Rural counties were hit hardest in the recent recession, and many had to reduce or eliminate mental health beds in regional facilities. Now, the safety net consists of fewer police officers and jail beds as a result of cuts to public safety funding," said Senator Jeff Kruse (R-Roseburg). "Individuals with unmanaged mental health issues need support, and rural counties are unable to provide it. Instead of partisan bickering over gun control policies that will not keep guns off the streets, we need to focus on investing in mental health services for vulnerable Oregonians."

Following the rejection of increased funding for mental health, Senate Democrats passed SB 941 in a 17-13 vote. SB 941 requires background checks on private firearms sales in Oregon. Senate Republicans joined Sheriffs across Oregon in arguing that the law as written would be difficult and costly for local public safety officials to enforce and have little effect on reducing crime in communities.

"SB 941 is an unfortunate departure from the bipartisan work we did last session to improve community-based mental health services," said Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day). "We need to give counties the funding they need to strengthen mental health services, not place further costly regulations on them that are difficult to enforce and unlikely to

reduce criminal activity."

###



**OREGON SENATE
REPUBLICANS**

www.oregonlegislature.gov/senaterepublicans

facebook.com/ORSenateRepublicans

[@ORSenateGOP](https://twitter.com/ORSenateGOP)