



TILLAMOOK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
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PRESS RELEASE

Date: May 11, 2026

Response to Tillamook County Investigation into DA's Office:

I have reviewed the investigator's report provided by Tillamook County. Below, I will address the "findings", and I will provide a summary of the work I have been doing to improve the District Attorney's Office since I was elected to serve as District Attorney.

The investigation did reveal some areas that need improvement, such as trial preparation and planning, communication, and additional procedures to ensure Deputy District Attorneys are consistently applying District Attorney policies. I take this feedback seriously, and I am working closely with my team to address those issues and implement better practices.

It is important to understand the investigator's "findings" lack any legal basis or authority. Except for pointing out that DA policies are required to be posted online under ORS 8.705, the investigator cited no laws, rules, or provisions of county policy that were at issue. Instead, the report included a list summarizing the allegations. In comparing those allegations to the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS), the few that correlate to victims' rights under [ORS chapter 147](#) were NOT FOUNDED. With regard to any claim of incompetence or other allegation that may correlate to a potential violation of the [Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct](#) (ORCP), only the Oregon State Bar can make such a formal determination applying specific legal standards. Those standards were not applied here and would not have been met if they had been applied. As a result, the investigator's "findings" are merely her opinion. I refute those "findings" for allegations that were FOUNDED, as they are based on an incomplete record, inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise incorrect facts or statements, and the investigator's personal views of how a DA should exercise their discretion.

When I took office in January 2023, my goal was to improve our practices to ensure we are equitably pursuing justice in support of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Oregon as prescribed in the oath of office I took. Prosecutors have long had a reputation for overcharging defendants and seeking overly harsh penalties for convicted offenders. These practices have led to more cases being filed and ultimately going to trial, resulting in more cases being acquitted or convictions being later reversed on appeal. For prosecutors, it results in increased workloads and a high burn out rate. My policies and procedures aim to change that, and it has been working.

To accomplish this goal, we have focused on prosecuting stronger cases, working with law enforcement to ensure investigations result in sufficient evidence to sustain prosecution, and providing training to law enforcement and other community partners to ensure they have the legal tools needed to improve investigations. I engage in regular meetings with law enforcement leadership, juvenile department staff, my Deputy DAs, the court, and other community partners to discuss issues and collaborate on solutions. I have committed to [justice reinvestment](#) as established by Oregon law to promote accountability, support rehabilitation, and prevent recidivism for convicted offenders. The ultimate goals are to increase the rate of successful prosecution, promote better use of limited public resources, and improve community safety.

Regarding victims' rights, I have been working closely with the District Attorney's Victims Assistance Program (VAP) staff to revamp policies and procedures to ensure we are consistently meeting our legal requirements for enforcing victims' rights. Shortly before I took office, VAP went through significant staffing changes, and while assisting with training, I realized the lines had become blurred between enforcing victims' rights and offering direct advocacy. This resulted in confusion, inefficiency, and mistakes related to victims' rights. We have worked diligently to establish clear guidelines, improve efficiency, and offer better services to victims. I am proud of the progress the VAP has made.

The DA's Office is committed to providing excellent legal representation for the State of Oregon within Tillamook County. We continually work to improve our processes, and I encourage the people of Tillamook County to provide constructive feedback.