

COLUMBIA COUNTY
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR COUNTY VOTERS' PAMPHLET

Ballot Title Caption: Renewal of Tax Levy for Jail Operations - Four Years

Measure Number (if known): _____ Word Total (500 Max): 417

Statement

Renewal of the Jail levy will permit the continued operation of the County jail. If the levy is not renewed the County will not have sufficient revenue to continue to pay for the necessary staffing, maintenance, and services required to keep the Jail fully operational.

In order to remain functional at current levels, the Jail's budget will rely on a combination of a continued \$1,000,000 contribution from the County General Fund, an increased amount of bed rentals to the U.S. Marshals Service and the renewal of the current levy amount of \$0.5797 / \$1,000.00 assessed value for another four years.

The County Jail houses adults awaiting trial who are accused of committing crimes in the cities and in the County. The Jail also houses adults who are serving a sentence of less than one year for city and State crimes. Cities do not pay the County for their use of the Jail.

Without renewal of the levy, in order to adopt a balanced budget, the County will be required to reduce Jail operations. Options to reduce Jail operations range from a reduction in local beds to 25 beds to a full closure of the facility. Without the levy, full closure of the Jail will depend on the number of beds rented by the US Marshals.

If the Jail is closed, all adults in custody will be released or transported to a different Jail as funding allows. If the number of local Jail beds is limited to 25, most local adults in custody will be released according to a matrix adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. Only high-level, Measure 11 arrestees who score high on the matrix will be held. The Sheriff and the cities can either rent a bed from another County if funding allows or release the arrestee. Due to the high cost to house local arrestees in other counties, the County does not anticipate funding will be available to house arrestees unless they are required by law to be held for trial. While transporting adults in custody to another jail, law enforcement will not be available for patrol or local response, reducing availability to address other local public safety issues.

By renewing the levy, the County anticipates that the Jail will remain open and functional at existing levels. As a renewal, property owners will continue to pay the existing levy rate for four years. A property owner with an assessed home value of \$100,000 would continue to pay \$57.97 per year for four years.

Person responsible for the content of the Explanatory Statement:

Kellie Jo Smith

(Name: TYPED)

x



(Name: SIGNED)

Columbia County Board of County Commissioners, Chair

Position

3/12/25

Date signed

Instructions

- The explanatory statement shall be typed.
- Word total: not to exceed 500 words.
- Signature: signed by the person responsible for the content of statement and to include the name of the governing body that person represents.
- Deadline: The statement filing deadline is the same deadline date as that of filing the Notice of Measure election (5pm)
- Note: The county clerk shall reject any referred measure submitted without an explanatory statement