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# OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 2548

In writing for the House Judiciary Committee, March 26, 2013

By: Darrell W. Fuller

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Chair Barker and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Oregon State Sheriffs' Association is comprised of Oregon's 36 elected county Sheriffs. Sheriffs take seriously their charge to be "conservators of the peace." Their role in public safety is broad, including routine patrol, investigating crime, search and rescue, marine patrol, jails, community corrections, court security, civil services and the issuance of concealed handgun licenses.

Many Sheriffs' offices in Oregon are in dire condition, financially. Twenty-four hour patrol coverage is gone. Inmates are released early or aren't held at all due to space limitations. Regardless of to whom one might lay the blame, from a recalcitrant Congress refusing to pay O & C Land counties, to rural taxpayers who refuse to increase their property taxes, to environmental groups who tie up any and all timber sales in court, Sheriffs are hurting and they are not looking for the light at the end of the tunnel. They are looking for the tunnel.

These Sheriffs are looking everywhere for assistance. The Federal government. The state government. Charities and even bake sales (for Search and Rescue, K9s and more). They are desperate for money and for community assistance until the economy improves.

But none of these Sheriffs, **not a single one** is looking to the bail bonds industry or bounty hunters for help. Each and every Sheriff is clear: a commercial bail bond system in Oregon will cost Sheriffs' offices money and decrease public safety. Period.

Sheriffs are not opposed to commercial partners in the execution of their public safety responsibilities when it saves money and makes sense. For example, many Sheriffs partner with businesses to provide meals to inmates. In this case, the Sheriff has control over the provider. This is not the case with a commercialized bail bonds system. House Bill 2548 is not about outsourcing, it is about giving private citizens, with very limited training, arrest authority in circumstances where the lives of uninvolved and unsuspecting bystanders will be in jeopardy.

One portion of the larger bill tells the whole story, really. It is on Page 21, lines 5 through 8. A "bail recovery agent" may not say anything that would suggest that they are a real peace officer, but they will wear utility shirts, pants and boots which will look exactly like what peace officers wear and they will be allowed to wear a badge, as long as the badge is approved by DCBS (not DPSST). Private citizens, wearing DCBS approved badges, arresting people, for a profit.

A commercial bail bond system is a bad idea. It is just that simple. Oregon's Sheriffs urge the committee to keep HB2548 in committee until adjournment. Thank you.

**Oregon State Sheriffs' Association**

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