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# OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2790

Before the House Judiciary Committee / April 18, 2013

By: Marion County Sheriff Jason Myers / [jmyers@co.marion.or.us](mailto:jmyers@co.marion.or.us)

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Chair Barker and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jason Myers, and I am the Marion County Sheriff. I'm here today representing the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association in support of House Bill 2790.

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.

To give you a little background on this issue. Each day in our country, more than 15 people are killed and more than 1,200 people are injured in crashes that were reported to involve a distracted driver. Distracted driving is driving while doing another activity that takes your attention away from driving; such as texting and using a cell phone. Statistics and studies confirm that distracted driving is the number one single cause of fatal crashes in the United States.

The Marion County Sheriff's Office has a Traffic Safety Team that focuses its efforts on reducing motor vehicle crashes in our County through Education, Enforcement and Engineering. We consistently analyze our team's efforts by reviewing crash data, local/national statistics and trends, and then focus our efforts on the traffic violations which contribute to the most crashes in our community. These efforts are targeted at Aggressive Driving, Speeding, Driving Under the Influence, and Distracted Driving. All of the violations I just mentioned are either a class C violation or higher, except for Operating a motor vehicle while using a mobile communication device (also known as "distracted driving") which is currently a class D violation. This is the lowest level of offense, yet one of the highest contributors to fatal traffic crashes.

Since distracted driving is the leading causes of fatal crashes in the United States, it would make sense to raise the classification of this violation from the lowest level of offense (class D) to a more serious offense (class A) as this bill is written.

The Oregon Sheriffs support House Bill 2790, and the effort to keep our roadways safe. Thank You

**Oregon State Sheriffs' Association**

PO Box 7468 Salem OR 97303 (503) 364-4204 [info@oregonsheriffs.org](mailto:info@oregonsheriffs.org) [www.oregonsheriffs.org](http://www.oregonsheriffs.org)