
OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 444 AND A REQUEST FOR AN AMENDMENT



In writing before the Senate Judiciary Committee

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Chair Prozanski and members of the Committee:

The Oregon State Sheriffs' Association (OSSA) 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.

Oregon Sheriffs do not believe adding smoking tobacco products in a vehicle when children are present as a secondary offense will pose a burden or cost on our ability to perform our patrol functions. Instead, Senate Bill 444 will provide patrol deputies with another tool in our toolbox to ensure the safety and welfare of the motoring public and their children.

If this bill should move forward, Oregon Sheriffs do ask the committee to consider an amendment to expand the offense to smoking any substance rather than limiting the bill to only tobacco-related smoke. As the committee is most certainly aware, in addition to tobacco, people smoke cloves and other substances which are both legal and illegal. And, as the committee also knows, the list of legal substances to smoke may be expanding in the coming months and years. We don't believe this expanded statute should be limited to only tobacco products.

Oregon Sheriffs thank Senator Steiner Hayward for soliciting our input on this bill prior to the hearing. We always appreciate legislators taking time to seek the perspective of those charged with enforcing the laws passed by the Legislature. We especially appreciate her sensitivity to the potential cost enforcing laws might have during a time when Sheriffs' offices are struggling financially with reductions in state funding for important priorities.