



# OREGON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

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“Representing Those Who Volunteer”

**Testimony of Genoa Ingram**  
**Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association**  
**In Support SB 128**  
**Senate Revenue Committee**  
**March 6, 2013**

The Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association (OVFA) represents emergency medical technicians, (EMTs) and firefighters across Oregon. Our membership is comprised of both volunteer and combination (volunteer responders working alongside paid firefighters) fire agencies. Some of these are special fire districts while others are city fire departments.

The OVFA is a 501(c)(3) organization that at one time provided hardship grants, death benefits, equipment grants, and text book grants for member and non-member volunteer firefighters and their family members, and contributions to much needed training efforts such as the Oregon Fire Instructors Association (OFIA) Safety Symposium. Grant and scholarship recipients were required to make application to the OVFA and a selection committee carefully considers each submission and chooses the successful candidates. In the case of a death, a check is cut immediately upon request by the district or department, no questions asked. Additionally, proceeds from an auction held at the annual conference goes to benefit the Oregon Burn Center. These are just a few of the charitable contributions by the OVFA.

The OVFA is a dues-based organization that is constantly exploring creative ways to raise funds, whether it be raffling off a classic car that has been donated, seeking federal grants, or even (in previous years) telemarketing.

In the winter of 2008-09, the OVFA set out to make application for the charitable tax check-off. We discovered that under ORS 305.727, the Association would be required to gather 10,000 signatures and show a gross income of at least \$1 million for the year prior to application. While the signature gathering is not a problem for volunteer firefighters, the \$1 million certainly is. SB

128 removes the \$1 million barrier for OVFA and allows the Association to move forward with the application process.

During the 2009 Legislative Session, an identical bill, HB 3414 received positive testimony by the Oregon Department of Revenue indicating that there was no negative impact to the Department. Similarly, there is no known negative impact to the Charitable Tax Check-off Commission. The bill subsequently passed the House unanimously.

In these very difficult economic times, a segment of our population is willing to step up and provide vital public safety services to their communities, often with significant out-of-pocket expense. The tax check-off will not impact Oregon's budget and will allow taxpayers to choose to support their volunteer firefighters by allowing the OVFA to continue to provide recognition and benefits to members and their families.

We urge your support of SB 128 and thank you for your consideration.