



**To: Members of the House Veterans and
Emergency Preparedness Committee**

From: Kevin Campbell, Executive Director
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police

Date: February 7, 2013

**Re: Support for HB 2182
First Responder Appreciation Day**

Chair Matthews and Members of the Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee,

My name is Kevin Campbell and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police. I've had the privilege of serving the men and women who lead our local police departments for nearing 20 years and I'm pleased today to testify in favor of HB 2182 on their behalf.

I want to begin by thanking Representative Boone for introducing this measure and the Chair and members of this committee for considering it today.

The over 300 members of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police want me to communicate their appreciation for your efforts to recognize the work of their police officers and all first responders who put their lives at risk on a daily basis to keep our citizens safe. The work of our police officers is dangerous, increasingly complex and at times...traumatizing.

In today's world, our police officers must be aware of an increasing breadth and depth of legal knowledge (Oregon and US Constitution, state statutes and local ordinances) that changes constantly based on new laws and court decisions. They must be able to consistently apply this knowledge accurately, fairly and impartially, often with only split seconds to render decisions with life and death implications. Officers that fail to meet our expectations face litigation and intense media scrutiny.

We expect our officers to be able to safeguard DNA evidence, to use communication and data technologies, clean-up methamphetamine labs and to intervene in domestic disturbances and child abuse cases where we require them to handcuff abusers and to safeguard victims in the most emotional and personal situations.

The increasing complexity and diversity of our communities impose an enormous challenge for officers as they strive to understand, communicate with and serve the public. We ask them to perform their duties in communities with an increasing number of citizens suffering from mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders where resources to address crisis are lacking and the responsibility to respond falls on our officers.

The very nature of crime itself has evolved in ways never before imagined due to changes in technology, a more mobile society and rapidly evolving world events. "Routine" public safety risks our officers deal with now, even in relatively small communities, include domestic and international terrorism, concerns that have rarely been considered part of the police officers' role in the past.

This measure may seem ceremonial, but the impact of this type of recognition should not be underestimated.

As I conclude, I would like to take a moment to remember some difficult days in our recent past to recognize that many of our law enforcement leaders in Oregon are also first responders and to remember the high risk nature of their work.

You will remember well December 12th, 2008, the day a bomb blast in a Woodburn bank took the lives of Woodburn Police Department Captain Tom Tennant and Oregon State Police Senior Trooper Bill Hakim and critically injured Police Chief Scott Russell. Captain Tennant and Chief Russell, who lost his leg as a result of the incident, were on scene checking on their responding officers when the blast occurred.

In Oregon, because we have a number of small police departments, police chiefs are often the first responders who take calls for service. Just two years ago on January 5th, 2011, Rainier Police Chief Ralph Painter was shot and killed while responding to a burglary in progress. It was neighboring Police Chief Marvin Hoover from Clatskanie Police Department who was one of the first responders who arrived on the scene in response to calls for backup.

Thank you for taking time to consider HB 2182 and for your support for police officers and other first responders.

We encourage your support for HB 2182!