



AFSCME COUNCIL 75 Supports

House Bill 4035 A

AFSCME asked that HB 4035 A be introduced. This is a pretty simple piece of legislation that makes a simple correction in the way the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) responds to the personal safety needs of Oregon's Professional Corrections Officers.

Other Public Safety employees such as Police Officers and County Corrections Officers have the right and ability to possess their duty or personal firearms on the way to and from work. Oregon Department of Corrections employees to our knowledge are the only Public Safety employees who are unable to protect themselves in this manner from a worst case scenario. As employees of the premier custody organization in Oregon, we think you will agree that this is unacceptable. As a result Oregon AFSCME is seeking legislation to rectify this personal safety issue for our members working in the ODOC.

Because of expanded Prison locations today, a large number of these officers live and work in rural Oregon. Some travel lengthy distances in remote areas to get to and from their work place. They are uniformed during this commute and we know all too well that citizens, both good and bad, don't know the difference between an off-duty, unarmed C.O. and an armed sworn police officer or sheriff. Worse, there may be individuals who specifically are targeting a Correctional Officer on behalf of someone on the inside. This places the officers at great risk of personal injury.

One of our members was murdered when he stopped to help what he thought to be a stranded motorist. Buddy Herron was in uniform at the time. He did not have his personal firearm because he was on his way to work. We will never know if Buddy would have been able to more adequately protect himself had he been armed, but for the thousands of other officers they believe it might have made the difference between his life and untimely death. They are asking the Legislature to affirm their right to carry their personal firearm to and from work and secure it in a locked gun box, or in a locked glove box inside their vehicle in the parking lots of Oregon's Prisons.

AFSCME Council 75, representing the men and women working in Oregon's Prisons, ask you to vote **Yes** for House Bill 4035.

Thank you