



**To: Members of the Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Public Safety**

**From: Chief Scott Russell, President
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police**

Date: February 26, 2015

**Re: Support for District Attorney's Funding
HB 5015, Department of Justice Budget**

Co-Chairs Shields and Williamson and members of the Committee,

Good afternoon, my name is Scott Russell and I am the Chief of Police for the City of Woodburn and the President of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police. I am here on behalf of the OACP to express our support for the work of our District Attorney's and for their funding needs.

As police officers, we stand at the entrance to Oregon's Criminal Justice System and are intimately familiar with the desperate need for adequate prosecutorial resources in our system. Without highly qualified district attorneys, a trained and adequately staffed group of DDA's, and adequate funds to produce witnesses, our system grinds to a halt.

After working hard to make an arrest and build a solid criminal case, it is extremely difficult to explain to a crime victim why their case is being dismissed for lack of prosecutorial resources. Yet, I along with many of my colleagues have this conversation far too often. Victims often ask if we need more police officers, and of course, the answer is yes. However, we have to tell them that no matter how many officers local government might employ, without adequate prosecutors, the system will not hold offenders accountable.

Only with adequate prosecutorial resources can victims and defendants alike hope to receive equal justice and an opportunity to overcome the criminal act that brought them together in the first place. Without adequate resources, criminal cases go unresolved and victims feel powerless.

With adequate resources, Oregon's criminal justice system has demonstrated its ability to work collaboratively to seek justice for victims, alternatives to incarceration for defendants and reduced recidivism. If we hope to maintain reductions in

Oregon's crime rate and prison population and increase our livability, we need to invest now in resources that will help our criminal justice system function effectively for all Oregon citizens.

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Oregon. We know that you have a difficult job and we know you have the very best of our state in mind as you perform your work.

Thank you!