



To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

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

Date: March 30, 2015

Re: Testimony regarding HB 2002

Chair Barker and members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Kevin Campbell and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police. I am here today on behalf the OACP to provide testimony regarding HB 2002.

First of all, I would like to thank the legislative sponsors and proponents of HB 2002 for engaging us in an important conversation regarding the provisions of this measure. We continue to work through proposed amendment language with the hopes that we can support the measure in time.

Let me begin by saying that bias policing is not professional policing and the members of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police are committed to best practice standards in hiring and training in order to insure that our police officers continue to have the full confidence of the communities they serve.

As we continue a discussion around bias policing in Oregon and as these same discussions take place in states around the U.S., Oregonians should be proud of our progressive policing leadership culture and the heroic work our police officers perform each and every day. Here in Oregon, we enjoy a public safety training academy and policing curriculum that are well regarded throughout the nation, we engage in a rigorous hiring process to insure that the right individuals are trained to wear a badge and carry a gun and we decertify officers when their conduct is contrary to the oath they take to serve and protect (100 public safety offers per year on average over the past decade). We are engaged in an ongoing effort to accredit our police agencies through the Oregon Accreditation Alliance and we are building critical partnerships with educational/research institutions through the Oregon Center for Policing Excellence in order to insure we are on the cutting edge of policing policy.

Within the last several years, the police officers role has become extraordinarily complex. Officers must be knowledgeable and competent regarding a constantly changing body of law (including the U.S. Constitution, state law, case law and local statutes). 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 utilize a barrage of new communication and data technologies, to use persuasion to de-escalate conflict and tension while minimizing the use of force and to intervene in domestic disturbances where we require them to handcuff abusers and safeguard victims in the most emotional and personal of situations. 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 the social services infrastructure is inadequate.

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, can include the potential for domestic and international terrorism, concerns that have rarely been considered part of the police officers’ role in the past.

We look forward to working with proponents of HB 2002 and members of the committee to address concerns and to move forward collaboratively in the days ahead.