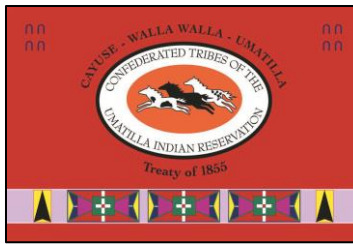


**Confederated Tribes *of the*  
Umatilla Indian Reservation**

Board of Trustees & General Council



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**Statement of Woodrow Star  
Member, Board of Trustees  
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation**

House Judiciary Committee  
Public Hearing on SB 343,  
Oregon State Capitol  
Monday, April 27, 2015

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Woodrow Star and I am an elected member of the Board of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Prior to my election, I worked in law enforcement services with the Bureau of Indian Affairs for over 24 years and I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 343.

Senate Bill 343 repeals the sunset clause contained in Senate Bill 412 (2011). That legislation authorized tribal police departments and their officers who meet State standards to exercise the same powers and observe the same duties as their non-tribal police counterparts.

By affording tribal police “peace officer” status in statute, Oregon’s tribes are providing a stronger public safety presence for safer communities without additional state or local investment. Our officers are often first responders when local police, Sheriff offices and Oregon State Police are not available in rural areas where resources are stretched thin. This benefits tribal members and non-tribal neighbors alike.

We do not take this responsibility lightly. Tribal police and their public safety partners have continued since 2011 to examine and collaborate with this statutory responsibility. During that span, tribes and their law enforcement partners convened two conferences with the express intent of discussing, understanding and addressing any challenges arisen from implementation of the 2011 Act. Tribes also commissioned a tribe-by-tribe examination of each tribe’s implementation of the Act. The Congressionally-appointed Indian Law and Order Commission received testimony about SB 412 in a field hearing conducted in Portland, and the Commission’s final report commends SB 412 as a model for consideration by other state legislatures and the tribes situated in those states.

The takeaway lesson from our shared experience since 2011: SB 412 has delivered on all of its promise. None of the feared difficulties have materialized.

Like a city or county, the Tribe invests resources in a police department primarily to protect and serve its own jurisdiction. But criminals do not respect the tribe’s boundaries any more than they respect the boundary between a city and a county or between two counties. A person driving under the influence of intoxicants is just as likely to kill or maim a member of the Tribe as they are to crash into a car driven by someone who is not a tribal member.

Peace officer status has been a success for our tribe and the surrounding community. That story has played itself out across the state with each tribe that employs police officers electing to participate. We encourage your support for lifting the sunset.