



# Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

May 14, 2015

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary

## **RE: House Bill 2424A**

Chair Prozanski and members of the Committee, I am Leonard Williamson, Inspector General for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am here to testify in support of HB 2424A and answer any questions.

### **What the Bill Does:**

HB 2424A is an expansion to HB 4035 from 2014 that would ensure coverage for all qualified DOC staff, as well as staff from cohabitating agencies, such as the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision and Oregon Corrections Enterprises to possess and store their personally-owned handguns in their vehicle, if a secure and locked storage location is not made available. It will also repair definitional and other ambiguities, as well as mitigate potential liability risks.

### **Background Information:**

Current language imposed through House Bill 4035 expressly authorizes DOC correctional officers with concealed handgun licenses to possess and store their personally-owned handguns in their personal vehicles while parked in the parking lots of DOC facilities *if* DOC has not provided a secure and locked location for storing personal handguns.

The presence of personal handguns onsite in the parking lots of DOC facilities, or stored onsite in designated storage areas (a practice that has been prohibited by long-standing DOC and DAS employment and facility access policy and practice in Oregon), poses obvious and significant safety and security risks and challenges for the management and operation of Oregon's prison facilities and offices. Moreover, the current language raises significant legal liability issues and concerns for DOC and the State of Oregon.

HB 2424A will fix a number of definitional and other ambiguities surrounding HB 4035's application and legal effect. It will also address basic fairness concerns for DOC staff that are not covered by the 2014 bill. In addition to covering DOC corrections officers, HB 2424A will cover all employees such as managers, food service staff, physical plant staff, counselors, and other staff, as well as staff from cohabitating agencies such as the Board of Parole and Oregon Corrections Enterprises. HB 2424A will better define key terms such as "vehicle" to exclude bicycles, and it will provide coverage for honorably retired law enforcement officers.

**Requested Action:**

Per Governor Kitzhaber's signing letter that accompanied HB 4035, the DOC has collaborated closely with labor leadership to develop this legislation, which would not only expand and clean up current statutory language, it would also address any outstanding operational or policy issues for the department. For the reasons explained above, the Department of Corrections requests the committee to vote HB 2424A out of committee with a do pass recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Submitted by:*

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