



# OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters  
AFL-CIO CLC

May 18, 2015

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Prozanski & Committee Members,

On behalf of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council, I respectfully request that you consider adopting amendments to HB 2208 to provide reasonable and necessary protections to public safety officers who risk their lives each and every day in the service of this great state and the public we serve. It is an honor and a privilege to represent fire fighters, but it is even more of an honor to have over 22 years of experience as an active fire fighter helping to make a difference in the lives of many, and serving the public.

Recently in a ruling from the Department of Justice, it is my understanding that information such as a date of birth (DOB) is not considered to be sensitive or protected information and is information that the media and others have a right to be provided. This decision is not only alarming and inconsistent with common sense, potentially without a legislative fix it will lead to unnecessary dangers that risk the lives of public safety officers and their families - including their children, without any significant relevance to the public good or interest. Amendments to HB 2208 will help address what public safety officers and organizations have come to realize: today's proliferation of social media and instant access to information while at times useful to helping us do our jobs, can also pose a greater risk to public safety officers. Right, wrong or indifferent, any individual with access to an electronic device armed with a date of birth, and very little additional information can easily pinpoint information about individuals that can then be used to do harm to them and their families. This is especially worrisome to your public safety officers.

While for now this is primarily a law enforcement concern, as a veteran fire fighter I can provide to you that this has become a public safety problem. Sadly, in today's society, it is not uncommon for a responding fire fighter to be confronted with violence or threatened with violence by a wide variety of individuals and emergency responses. Whether it is the deliberately set fire with an armed individual threatening to kill, all that come to contain the situation to the medical aid assistance call for such things as a drug overdose, first responders are seeing an ever increasing amount of dangers from those that would elect to do harm to them and their families. This coupled with continued intelligence that strongly suggests domestic, as well as international threats, should be taken seriously by first responders. Protecting personal information from disclosure, including social media mediums, make it clear of the ever changing dangers confronted by public safety officers and how information like a DOB can place an unnecessary risk on them and their families. However, response does not mean taking unnecessary risk but rather calculated risk. The dissemination of a public safety officer's DOB to the media and others is an unnecessary risk and one that the Oregon Legislature can resolve with the proposed amendments to HB 2208.

Your fire fighters, along with our partners in the entire public safety community, ask that while we are willing each and every day to give the ultimate sacrifice to save a life, today we are asking you to help keep our private lives and the lives of our families safer, by protecting sensitive personal information like a date of birth.

Respectfully,

Bob Livingston  
Legislative Director