



CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



Bureau of Police

Charlie Hales, Mayor

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February 9, 2016

Oregon State Legislature
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
C/O Representative Barker, Chair
900 Court Street, NE, Hearing Room 343
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 4013

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The Portland Police Bureau expresses its support of HB 4013, which authorizes counties to establish a multidisciplinary fatality review team to assist local organizations and agencies in identifying and reviewing fatalities involving abuse or neglect of elderly or vulnerable persons.

Sadly, the State of Oregon experienced an increase in reports of abuse and neglect of elders and vulnerable persons over the last year – approximately 38,000 reports were filed, 18,000 allegations were investigated, and 4,500 allegations were sustained. While it is reasonable to expect additional increases as Oregonians live longer, of concern are unreported and/or unidentified cases, as abuse and neglect are demonstrated in direct forms (e.g. physical trauma, premature death) and more subtle ways (e.g. depression, anxiety, fear, financial exploitation).

Although it is difficult to understand the scope, depth, and breadth of abuse and neglect facing vulnerable populations, the fatality review team approach has been successful in other areas. Multidiscipline teams focused on child abuse and domestic violence for instance, have improved early intervention and communication between support agencies and organizations. Indeed information about such cases has been collected, analyzed and utilized to support recommendations that further prevent harm, injury or death. An Elder Fatality Review Team established now will ensure all service providers have information about how well collaborative responses are working or not and allow all of us to work together to close gaps and deliver services and protections that will save lives and improve the quality of life of our elders.

The Portland Police Bureau shares in the common goal to eliminate abuse and neglect of the elderly and vulnerable persons. The Police Bureau has assigned members to the Interagency Committee for Abuse Prevention (ICAP), a regional, multidiscipline working group, which has been meeting to discuss abuse and neglect cases. However, the Police Bureau looks forward to raising its level of sophistication and effectiveness of response to these cases via state-wide collaboration.

Thank you in advance for your support of this important effort.

Sincerely,

LAWRENCE P. O'DEA III
Chief of Police

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