



To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Sheriff John Hanlin,
Douglas County Sheriff's Office

Date: May 17, 2017

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 508 A-Engrossed

Good afternoon Chair Barker and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is John Hanlin. I am the Sheriff of Douglas County, currently serving my third term. Thank you for allowing me time to testify today.

I am before you today in support of **Senate Bill 508 A-Engrossed** on behalf of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association and the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police. I have been with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office for over 28 years. Prior to being elected Sheriff, I served as the commander of the Sheriff's Office Detectives Division and major crimes team. As a result of my years of experience in criminal investigations, I firmly believe that the disclosure of photographs and/or images of deceased victims of crime should be diligently protected. And that nothing good can come from disclosing these images during a public records request.

Whether it be the typical homicide case (which on average occurs more than 100 times a year in Oregon), a fatal traffic crash (nearly 500 fatalities in 2016), or a tragic school shooting like the one we experienced at Umpqua Community College on Oct. 1, 2015...all of these cases create opportunity through public records requests to obtain and exploit photos and images of someone's deceased loved one. I consider this a form of sensationalism that is immoral, unethical and harmful.

As a law enforcement official, I feel a profound responsibility to seek justice for the victims of these heinous crimes. I'm hopeful that you will decide that the release of these images are not in the best interest of the public and will support the passage of SB 508 in order to protect the dignity of the deceased and the privacy of the families of these victims.

As we prepare to respond to hundreds of "public information requests" involving the UCC tragedy, I become increasingly concerned about the privacy of the victims and their

families. I have personally met with the families of all the victims of UCC on numerous occasions. They have all shared their anxiety and concerns about the information that could be potentially shared through the public information request process once the UCC Shooting investigation is declared closed. And unanimously, I have been asked to do everything I can to protect them from reliving that horrific day.

If images are made available through Public Information laws, there is undoubtedly SOMEONE out there who will, with no regard to what's in the public's best interest, display those images on social media... if nowhere else.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill. This bill, if passed, would take a substantial step in protecting the privacy these people and families of other deceased persons very much deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.