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Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Conservators of the Peace

DPSST Budget Testimony

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Chair Winters, Chair Stark, members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety. For the record, my name is Jason Myers, I am the Marion County Sheriff and I'm here representing the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association, in support of the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training budget.

I'd like to begin my remarks on a personal note and take you back 26 years when I was just starting a law enforcement career. About a month after landing my life-long dream job, I entered the doors of the Oregon Police Academy in Monmouth to begin eight weeks of formal training, as an Oregon public safety professional. Along with learning technical aspects of my job, several career-long impressions that this foundational training imparted on me are the importance of public safety collaboration and consistency and the need to always strive to do better.

Today, the academy is a state-of-the-art facility located in Salem, with top-notch leadership and training staff. The basic public safety training academies have continued to meet the complex training needs of our public safety professionals by adding relevant training content and by increasing the length of training time. As more than 1,000 Oregon law enforcement, corrections and parole & probation officers approach retirement age, the negative impact of reducing the number of available training academies would be devastating to agencies large and small across the state. Delays would add burden and increased workload to current public safety professionals who are already tasked with adapting to new expectations and changes in policies and practices, as we remain nimble in meeting our communities' needs.

The academy also provides a common ground for groups that tackle best practices on current law enforcement trends and issues. One example is the joint Chiefs – Sheriffs workgroup on Mental Health Response – which I'm sure you recognize as a very important topic in public safety today. Through this academy Workgroup, you'll find leaders from across the state, coming together to vet topics such as crisis intervention training, de-escalation, and statewide policy framework. Additionally, the academy remains vested in building community partnerships by attending

community forums, educating residents about how public safety professionals are training and allowing first hand experiences for individuals who serve as role players.

In closing, I have the privilege of serving as Chair of the Oregon Board on Public Safety Standards and Training, and I can tell you that they carry out their vital duties on a very lean budget. They're efficient, collaborative and supportive. Our State should be very proud of the investments that have been made in this academy and training system. I know that you will have many difficult decisions to make this session. I respectfully ask that you support this important budget, as the training that is provided to our law enforcement professionals is fundamental to community safety and livability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.