



To: Members of the Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response

From: Jason Myers, Executive Director
Oregon State Sheriff's Association (OSSA)

Kevin Campbell, Executive Director
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police (OACP)

Re: Law Enforcement Response to COVID-19
Identifying Issues Impacting Officers and Policing Agencies

Co-Chair Roblan and Holvey and members of the committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association. We know you are all being bombarded with communications, information, recommendations and concerns from a wide range of citizens, organizations and agencies. With that in mind, we wanted to provide a succinct briefing on the issues that law enforcement is navigating and insure we are keeping lines of communication open.

First of all, we want you to know that the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, Oregon State Sheriffs' Association and Oregon District Attorney's Association are working very closely with all of our public safety state agency partners in order to insure the highest level of coordination and to identify and quickly solve problems as they surface. Without exception, we are receiving an unprecedented level of support and coordination that is the fruit of a strong partnership that was built over a number of years. These partners include Oregon State Police, Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, Oregon Department of Justice, Oregon Department of Corrections, Oregon Youth Authority and Oregon Criminal Justice Commission. We are also working closely with the Associated Oregon Counties and the League of Oregon Cities. Here are a few issues we are currently navigating. We are attempting to resolve issues without the need for legislation wherever possible. We are working with Rob Bovett at AOC and Aaron Knott with DOJ to identify statutory changes that attempt to resolve issues we can't address in other ways. We are hopeful the committee will give this language consideration and support:

First responder's COVID-19 testing: We are working with the ECC with the help of Superintendent Hampton to insure that test kits are prioritized for first responders who face a 14 day quarantine due to sickness that may or may not be COVID-19. Immediate testing of these officers is critical so that officers who are negative for COVID-19 can be returned to work as quickly as possible. Without the testing, an officer who doesn't have COVID-19 must quarantine for the entire 14 day period. If an officer has COVID-19, it will be incredibly important to limit the potential spread to other first responders and others that they came in contact with. Without testing, the officer would complete a 14 day quarantine (or more depending on their level of sickness), and the agency would be left to wait to see if others get sick. The spread could sideline any number of officers and critical staff within a police agency. This challenge isn't theoretical. In Benton County, three deputies were exposed to COVID-19 where they are currently quarantined. In Jefferson County, five deputies are currently in a 14 day quarantine due to a potential exposure to COVID-19.

Emergency Responder Access to COVID-19 hot spots or information regarding persons infected with COVID-19: While emergency responders will always respond to any location, it is vital for police officers, fire personnel and emergency medical service personnel to have information up front so our first responders are prepared with proper PPE. This helps to avoid exposure to our first responders who could later unknowingly contract COVID-19 and infect others. Information on locations where persons infected with the virus can be uploaded to the dispatch CAD system and flags a dispatcher when they receive a call at a location or hot spot where persons infected are located. The dispatcher can advise any first responder (Police, Fire, EMS) to use universal precautions, so the first responder knows going into the situation they must wear the proper PPE. No names or personally identifiable information would be shared, sharing any personal information would be strictly prohibited and information would be destroyed based on a specific statutory timeline.

Access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for first responders: Much like the medical profession, first responders are finding their supplies of PPE running extremely low to being completely out. Any assistance in procuring these items would be greatly appreciated.

Enforcing Governor's Executive Orders re Businesses and Oregonians: We are working closely with the Oregon Department of Justice and the Governor's Public Safety Advisor to implement the Governor's Executive Orders. We are working with our state agency partners like the Oregon Liquor Control Commission to leverage strong administrative sanctions for non-compliant licensees as opposed to citations of business owners and patrons by police officers. As you know, police officers are authorized to cite for non-compliance with a C-Misdemeanor to enforce the Governor's Executive Orders. Due to our limited law enforcement resources and the need to limit unnecessary direct contact between officers and members of the public in light of COVID-19, we believe licensing agencies are a good option for encouraging voluntary compliance. In response to our request, OLCC developed an informational flyer and a process for notifying OLCC when an officer identifies a non-compliant licensee. OLCC agreed to intercede by seeking voluntary compliance and to utilize their authority to immediately

suspend a license for persistent non-compliance. We are working with other licensing authorities to develop similar protocols for other non-compliant businesses. With our very limited law enforcement resources and personnel, we are recommending that officers approach non-compliance by educating businesses and citizens followed by warning if necessary. Enforcement action would be a last resort. Our police officers are very busy handling other calls for service.

Finally, first responders stand ready to play a positive role during this time of crisis. We want to emphasize that early information regarding changes in policy impacting Oregonians and Businesses is critically important so that first responders can develop best practice protocols and strive for consistent and unified response statewide.

Thank you for your good work on behalf of all Oregonians!