

I am writing to you today in support of law enforcement and your upcoming special session this week.

Across the country, laws, legislation, discussions, etc are being made and handed down by mayors, city councils, legislators, and politicians that have not completed due diligence to fully understand police work, yet expect officers to risk their lives daily.

If you are going to decide how our officers do their job and return home safe, then I need you to not sit in your safe place. You need to make decisions from a place of knowledge and experience. You need to understand how policing works. These officers have families and communities to keep safe and the time for political grandstanding in the name of "looking good" is over. Remember, the law enforcement community and their supporters vote, and we see you!

There are several easy things you, and your fellow Oregon legislators, can do to come from a place of knowledge about police work:

- Take a Citizens Academy Class (many counties offer this)
- Go on a ride along from different agencies in different areas
- Experience a Crime Simulation with use of force and report what your results were
- Sit down and talk with the spouses and family members of fallen officers, wounded and injured officers, officers lost to suicide, and officers forced to retire due to PTSD

I am fearful about the hateful rhetoric that the media (both social and mainstream) is spawning in regards to law enforcement. I am fearful that our legislators are pandering to the outspoken, uninformed mob, and making policy changes that will have unintended consequences in our communities. I am fearful for the safety of our officers out on the streets with a mob who no longer respects authority and feels they can do whatever they want without consequence. **NOW IS THE TIME TO SUPPORT OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY.**

The following is an excerpt from a statement made by an Oregon police officer:

"No one hates bad cops more than good cops. This isn't 1933. Corruption isn't rampant; there isn't some grand nationwide conspiracy. There are just guys and gals, trying to do the impossible job that y'all keep telling us to do. You keep sending us out there, with more and more confusing mandates. You keep cutting our funding, and asking why our training isn't better. You keep cutting mental health services and then asking why we, the **ONLY PEOPLE** who are absolutely required to respond to a call for help, are the ones to respond to a call for help for a mental health crisis. You keep letting people out of jail and then being surprised when that somehow doesn't lower crime. You keep telling us not to "generate revenue" by making traffic stops, and then wonder why the roads are so dangerous. You keep calling us for problems that are **OBJECTIVELY** not police problems, and then being angry that we either (a) cannot provide a solution, or (b) provide a police solution.

You keep insisting we be everything to everyone at all times, and you keep getting mad at us when we are merely human.

But here's the thing. Police agencies are already critically understaffed. We don't have the personnel to do all the jobs you ask us to do. And you keep asking us to do jobs that we really aren't trained for, and most of us aren't temperamentally suited for. And you keep insisting that every single one of us, like some sort of factory-produced drone, be equally good at all the

things you want us to do. That's ignoring basic human realities. To use just one analogy, a good school doesn't insist that the English teacher also teach chemistry, math, history, and orchestra; coach soccer and football and run the AV club; and act as the nurse and entire cafeteria crew. And yet you keep insisting that street cops be medics and social workers and soldiers and detectives and counselors and therapists and surrogate parents and lawyers and... ...and we can't. We just can't."

Respectfully,

Kari Zohner

"Always take time to look up"