



## **STATEMENT RE: LC 743**

### **(UNIFORM STANDARDS)**

**To:** Joint Committee On Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform  
**From:** Michael Selvaggio, Oregon Coalition of Police and Sheriffs  
**Date:** July 28, 2020

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Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee:

For the record, my name is Michael Selvaggio, representing the Oregon Coalition of Police and Sheriffs (ORCOPS). For your consideration on LC 743, which sets various standards for law enforcement officer uniforms, we ask to incorporate the following adjustments:

- Exceptions for plainclothes officers  
Aside from the existing exceptions for SERT, consider adding uniform and vehicle exemptions for plainclothes officers who often serve a de-escalating function. For example, a detective interviewing a minor victim may be able to better reduce situational tension if she is able to appear in plain clothing as opposed to her full uniform.
- Allowing vests  
Let's continue the good work we did on officer wellness last year by allowing officers to carry their 30-40 pounds of gear on a vest made for distributing that weight, instead of on their hips. In terms of protection, the alternative is an "internal vest," which are typically designed for a 5'10", 175-lb white male. (Female alternatives are not fitted with regard for body type, and I'm told can be extra uncomfortable.) External vests provide a better fit, better distribution of weight, and allow for carrying additional gear -- typically first aid supplies such as tourniquets, bandages, or Narcan -- to assist civilians in need.
- Provide for circumstances where an Officer's ID number may be used  
In most circumstances, display of an officer's name on their uniform is a matter of course. The public's ability to identify an individual officer and their unit is vital to maintaining a well-regulated and accountable force. However, at recent crowd control actions, a number of officers have been confronted with very specific threats against

them personally... and against their households. Hand-held devices and publicly-accessible databases make it easy to discern an officer's home address and household information from even their last name in some circumstances. As a result, several officers have been taunted with knowledge of their home address -- some have been threatened with rape or other violent acts and have had to physically separate from their families for the time being. We would ask that the legislation allow for exigent circumstances in which an identifying number may be used in place of an officer's name -- this would still allow for identification of an individual officer for purposes of holding an officer to account for their actions, but provide some measure of protection for their families.

To the degree that law enforcement uniforms have evolved out of the need for personal safety, good health, and the ability to de-escalate, we hope that our concerns can be incorporated.



## **VALUES STATEMENT RE: Officer Identification**

**To:** Joint Committee On Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform

**From:** Michael Selvaggio, Oregon Coalition of Police and Sheriffs

**Date:** July 30, 2020

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Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee:

Co-Chair Bynum requested a statement of values from ORCOPS with regard to the identification of officers. ORCOPS is pleased to outline the following values and priorities.

### **Values**

- First, that officers and their families are protected from any unnecessary risk stemming from a method of identification.
- Second, that law enforcement officers on duty are able to be individually identified in a manner that allows for effective reporting of any allegations of misconduct.
- Third, that when not conflicting with the first priority, good community relationships are served by a clear display of officers' names when in uniform.
- Additionally, that there may be limited circumstances in which an officer's duty necessitates that they not be identified as a law enforcement officer, such as undercover operations, and those circumstances are provided for. There may be certain officers who are better able to de-escalate situations in plain clothes, and those options should be provided for.

### **Exception**

ORCOPS members are used to displaying their names on their uniforms in the course of their official duties. However, under certain circumstances, such as emotionally-charged crowd control events, officers have fielded violent threats against their persons and against their households -- fueled by personal information derived from their name tags. In some situations, officers have been taunted with the knowledge of their home address, and some are currently living separated from their families.

ORCOPS requests that officers in crowd control situations be able to utilize an identifier in lieu of their name in circumstances in which their commanding officer determines that display of an

officer's name could result in an undue additional threat to an officer's person or family, pursuant to policy adopted by the employing jurisdiction.

## Examples

A simple identifying number can be just as or even more visible than an officers' name, especially if the name is relatively long:



Above, the example Officer Englebert Humperdinck (a real name) has his name legible, but less clear than an identifying number, which would only be used in limited crowd control circumstances. *(Note: To compare, "Humperdinck" is 11 letters; my son's last name is 14 letters plus a hyphen. - Mike)*

Even when written the full breadth across a chest, the numeric identifier is clearer, especially in the case of a blurry photograph. Additionally, the obtaining of a partial identification would still be easily resolvable to a particular officer. (I.e: If the example was identified as "P-1-2-blank")



In sum, ORCOPS' proposal and values maintain that (non-undercover) law enforcement officers on duty are able to be individually identified in a manner that allows for effective reporting of any misconduct.