



# JUNCTION CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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March 20, 2019

Chair Representative Jennifer Williamson  
Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. N.E.  
Salem, OR 97301

**SUBJECT:** Please place this statement of opposition on the record for House Bill 3338

Dear Chair Representative Jennifer Williamson and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I write to express my unequivocal opposition to House Bill 3338 which would disarm police officers employed by universities located in cities with population exceeding 150,000. I am uniquely qualified to provide a balanced perspective on this topic because of my bifurcated professional and academic background. Since 1975 I have served in various positions in the law enforcement / criminal justice profession ranging from line-staff to executive leadership.

In addition to my experience as a police officer I am a lifelong learner having achieved a Master's degree in Educational Leadership, which required spending years as a student. Moreover, I am a career-long adult educator and have simultaneously served as an adjunct instructor and guest lecturer in several institutions in the higher education system.

The job of sworn police officers have dramatically transformed in my more than four decades of experience. The evolutions have occurred in two distinct spaces, first by way of increased and mandated training, education, and certification standards for police officers; the undisputed results of which are increased competence and the conversion of the position of police officer from a "job" to a "profession". The certification requirements established by the Oregon Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (BPSST) and the Oregon Legislature are uniform and identical for state troopers, deputy sheriffs', municipal police officers, and university police officers. Second but equally important are the realistic, and equally undisputed, effects caused by the increased prevalence and frequency of violent crimes committed by people.

Sadly our personal safety as citizens, and that of our children, has undergone commensurately proportionate changes, and not for the better. The types of violence that have become common place on the evening news and the front page of newspapers have never before been experienced in our society. People, adults and children alike, are walking into our nation's schools, churches, shopping centers, business offices, and governmental institutions on almost a daily basis and committing heinous crimes using a vast myriad of firearms, explosives, and/or chemical-based weapons. Universities are small cities in and of themselves with populations in the tens of thousands and are comprised of each of these types of targets.

*An Oregon accredited agency*



The only way to save lives and stop most of these random massacre-based incidents, not to mention the far more common emotionally disturbed armed person who poses an immediate threat to just a few people, is by having highly disciplined, trained, skilled, and equipped professionals that are willing to put their own lives in jeopardy to save another. And while instinctively contradictory to how most people think and were raised, and as unappealing as it may be, the harsh reality is that the option of deadly force is an alternative such professionals must have at their immediate disposal. Taking this tool away from any police officer, regardless if their duty assignment is a school, municipality, or even the State Capitol, is critically dangerous to the officer as well as those whom they are charged with protecting.

The Junction City Police Department works closely with the University of Oregon Police Department (UOPD) on a regular basis; we have provided mutual aid to the UOPD, and they to Junction City, on a number of occasions. Some of the incidents UOPD officers have responded to in Junction City include threats of an active shooter at a school, several incidents where explosives were suspected, wanted felons, and traffic enforcement saturation patrols. In all of these incidents their officers have validated their competence, displayed nothing short of unquestionable professionalism, and demonstrated sound judgement and decision-making. The Junction City Police Department is operationally dependent upon UOPD for mutual aid; disarming these officers will have a direct negative impact to the safety of our officers and citizens as this will render yet one more resource useless, in an already resource-poor environment.

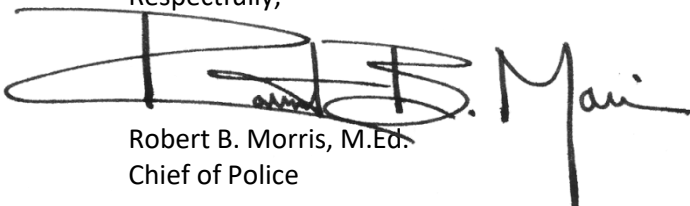
The Oregon Accreditation Alliance (OAA) accredits law enforcement agencies. The process to attain law enforcement accredited status is rigorous and not an easy thing to achieve. It takes dedication, effort and the ability to prove, by both policy and demonstrated practice, that an agency meets a set of best practice standards. Accreditation means that an agency, their operations, management, policies and procedures meet the current best practices the industry has to offer. The accreditation process in general is a progressive and contemporary way of helping law enforcement agencies evaluate and improve their overall performance and provides formal and professional recognition that an organization meets or exceeds best practice expectations of service and quality in the profession. In order to be accredited, an agency must meet 104 professional standards comprised of over 400 separate requirements contained within those standards.

In Oregon currently, right at 35% of all law enforcement agencies have chosen to take on the accreditation process and only 24% of Oregon agencies currently hold state accreditation. By achieving accredited status the Junction City Police Department joined a small and select group of agencies that have taken the extra effort to meet accreditation standards and provide our community with the benefit and confidence that their police department takes standards and best practices seriously.

The UOPD is in the final stages of completing the accreditation process so they too will soon possess this same mark of excellence. UOPD is an asset to not only the university population, but to the surrounding communities as well. For anyone to assert or imply that UOPD, or any other agency, officers are irresponsible or should not carry firearms is a gross miscarriage of justice to the communities they serve.

The thought that anyone would consider unarming any police officers in any community is inconceivable and irresponsible as it places lives of community members and that of police officer in imminent danger. For these reasons I implore you to **NOT** pass this dangerous bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. B. Morris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

Robert B. Morris, M.Ed.  
Chief of Police