



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Public Safety Standards and Training

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DATE: April 2, 2019

TO: House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Chair Representative Paul Evans
Vice-Chair Representative Rick Lewis
Vice-Chair Representative Mark Meek
Member Representative Lynn Findley
Member Representative Courtney Neron
Member Representative Kim Wallan
Member Representative Marty Wilde
Member Representative Jack Zika

FROM: Eriks Gabliks, Director

SUBJECT: HB 2204-2

Summary: HB 2204 will provide funds to the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission to support a pilot reserve law enforcement officer training program.

Background: The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST), in consultation with the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (BPSST), is responsible for the certification and licensure for Oregon's nearly 42,000 public and private safety providers. The DPSST/BPSST regulatory constituency includes law enforcement officers (police, corrections, parole & probation and OLCC regulatory specialists), telecommunicators (9-1-1), emergency medical dispatchers, criminal justice instructors, fire service professionals, private security providers, private investigators and polygraph examiners.

During testimony on the -2 amendments to HB 2204 a number of questions were asked by Committee members regarding the work of DPSST in this area. We felt it was important to address these questions on the record through this correspondence.

The 68th Oregon Legislative Assembly through Senate Bill 669 directed BPSST to establish minimum training and certification standards for Reserve Law Enforcement Officers by December 31, 1996. SB 669 specifically stated that nothing in this act requires a law enforcement unit to certify individuals who are utilized to perform the duties of a reserve officer, or for BPSST to provide training for, or to fund, certification of reserve officers. Unfortunately, SB 669 did not provide any funds for DPSST or BPSST to implement this training and certification program for reserve officers.

Reserve officers are defined in Oregon Revised Statute as an officer or member of a law enforcement unit who is a volunteer or is employed less than full-time as a peace officer, who is armed with a firearm, and who is responsible for enforcing the criminal laws and traffic laws of this state or laws or ordinances relating to airport security.

Oregon communities are served by more than 500 reserve officers who work primarily for city and county law enforcement agencies. In many communities reserve officers augment full-time law enforcement officers. In some smaller communities around our state reserve officers may be the only ones on duty protecting residents and property. Reserve law enforcement officers are exposed to the same personal safety risks full-time officers are. Reserve officers not being trained or certified exposes their employing agencies to liability risks. The men and women around our state who serve as reserve officers play an important role in helping to keep our state and communities safe.

SB 669 required that DPSST and BPSST address a number of elements including: 1) Establish for certified reserve officers reasonable minimum standards of physical, emotional, intellectual and moral fitness. 2) Establish for certified reserve officers reasonable minimum training for all levels of professional development basic through executive. 3) Establish for certified reserve officers a procedure to determine if persons are qualified as meeting minimum standards or have minimum training. 4) Establish procedures for the certification and revocation of reserves.

DPSST/BPSST has submitted budget requests for the reserve law enforcement program envisioned within SB 669 for fiscal years 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2009 and 2019. Unfortunately limited state budget dollars have required these requests to be denied each legislative session as the program is voluntary in nature by design within SB 669.

DPSST understands the important role reserve officers play in our state. Unfortunately, DPSST does not have the staffing or budget to offer or support regional reserve officer training academies. While our budget requests have been denied, DPSST does offer reserve officers seats in our regional training classes when seats are not being used by full-time officers. We realize this is not the solution to the statewide issue but at this time it is the best we can offer.

The creation of the Oregon Public Safety Academy in Salem allowed our state to create a location that enables our full-time city, county, state, tribal and university law enforcement officers to attend a professional academy that allows for, and embraces, scenario-based and hands-on training. The new Academy addressed entry-level training needs and has received recognition for its effectiveness and innovation. DPSST's vision of five regional training centers that enable perishable skills training (emergency vehicle operations, survival skills, firearms, etc.) to be maintained near the employing agency continues to remain a strategic and long-term goal of the organization. DPSST maintains dozens of partnerships that enable our organization to deliver regional training around the state using local facilities free of charge but these venues are not the same as those at the Salem campus. We submitted a budget request to begin this work in 2017 but a lack of state funds resulted in this request being denied.

We want to support reserve law enforcement training programs in Oregon but need additional resources to make this a reality. We understand that we are not alone as an organization that needs more resources to help support local public safety agency and community needs. We also know the budget limitations of the state and support the Governor's budget.

I thank you for your interest in the work done by the staff at DPSST and wanted to share our challenges and limitations.
