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Salem (503) 364-4204
Fax (503) 364 -2059

Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Conservators of the Peace

Good afternoon Chair Williamson and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Troy Clausen. I am the undersheriff of Marion County. It is a privilege to address you this morning, especially around these two proposed legislative bills. I have been in law enforcement for over 28 years now and officer wellness is extremely important to me. I am currently the co-chair of a joint OACP/OSSA Statewide Task force focusing on Officer Wellness. I am before you today to offer support both as a law enforcement professional and as a representative of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association.

For the past year, I have been a part of a workgroup led by Senator Frederick that has focused on the issue of law enforcement officer mental health wellness. It has been an honor to work with Senator Frederick, Sen. Prozanski, peers and colleagues from across various disciplines, creating a body of work that resulted in these two proposed bills; all with the goal of hiring and retaining the best candidates to serve our communities as law enforcement officers.

With respect to SB 423-A, in my experience, pre-employment psychological examinations are a critical piece of the law enforcement officer hiring process. Agencies across Oregon have a responsibility to hire the best candidates possible and these examinations give us another tool to be able to do just that. In addition to validating that the candidate is of the proper psychological makeup to be successful as a police officer, these examinations also offer us critical insight into the candidate that, should we hire the individual, helps us in the training process so that newly hired law enforcement officers can provide the best service possible to our respective jurisdictions. I fully support SB 423-A.

SB 424 is also important legislation. As a member of the joint OACP/OSSA task force we recently conducted a state wide survey with a response rate of over 90%. It was found that roughly 35 percent of agencies across the state have no formal training or policy around officer wellness for law enforcement supervisors and executives. Officer Wellness, to include mental/emotional wellbeing, physical wellbeing, and nutritional wellbeing is just as important, maybe even more so, than the other law enforcement survival skills, such as defensive tactics, firearms, and confrontational simulation. Requiring agencies to develop and adopt policies that address such a critical need to our profession is frankly just the right thing to do.

A goal of the joint OACP/OSSA task force is to develop a policy framework for agencies of all sizes in Oregon to utilize as a map to develop such policies. These types of action will lead to our employees entering the career field with the best mindset possible and to help them retire from this profession healthy. I fully support SB 424.

Thank you all for the work that you do to support our profession and the members who serve our communities daily.