



**To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee**

**From:** Chief Jim Ferraris, Woodburn Police Department  
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police

**Date:** April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Re: Support for SB 423-A (Pre-employment Psych Exam Requirement)  
and SB 424 (Police Agency Officer Wellness Policies)**

**Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee,**

For the record, my name is Jim Ferraris. I currently serve as the Chief of Police for the City of Woodburn and I am here today on behalf of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police to speak in favor of SB 423-A and SB 424. During my career, I have provided 41 years of service to the citizens of Oregon in the largest and some of the smallest law enforcement agencies in our great state. I am before you today to offer my support of SB 423-A and SB 424, both as an Oregon law enforcement professional and in my role as the Vice President of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police (OACP).

For the last several months, I have been participating in a workgroup led by Senator Frederick that focused on the issue of pre-employment psychological examinations and the issue of law enforcement officer mental health wellness. It has been a privilege to work with Senator Frederick and 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. I have been a supporter of officer wellness initiatives for many years in my career and served on OACP/OSSA led statewide workgroups on mental health issues, specifically officer wellness. I can tell you with a degree of certainty that Oregon law enforcement leaders take the mental health of our members very seriously. While our joint OACP/OSSA workgroups have resulted in a solid path forward, this bill would require agencies to have a mental health wellness policy in place. Such an action only makes a law enforcement agency stronger, and its personnel more capable and adaptable to address the variety of situations encountered in such work. I fully support SB 424.

Thank you for giving me time to express my support for these important bills.