



To: Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

From: Jeff Groth, President
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police
Police Chief, City of Sherwood

Date: February 28, 2019

Re: Support for SB 5530 – Support for Oregon State Police Budget

Co-Chair Winters, Co-Chair Piluso and committee members,

For the record, my name is Jeff Groth. I am the Police Chief for the City of Sherwood and serve as the President of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police. I am here today on behalf of the OACP to encourage your support for the Oregon State Police budget.

Police departments across the State of Oregon depend on a full range of programs and services that only the Oregon State Police are able to provide. These include a number of “system critical” services including the work of the Forensics Services Division, Medical Examiner’s Office, Law Enforcement Data System (LEDS), Firearms Instant Check System (FICS), Criminal Investigations Division, State Fire Marshal’s Office and the Patrol Services Division. Without adequate funding for these important functions, our ability to function as a system of justice is impaired.

In my role as the President of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, I’m making it a priority to travel throughout Oregon to visit with my colleagues and to try to understand their work and their challenges. In Oregon, we have 64 police agencies with less than 10 sworn officers where the police chief pulls shifts and responds to calls for service in addition to managing the daunting challenge of running their departments. For these agencies and for all of our agencies, large and small, OSP is a critical part of accomplishing the law enforcement mission.

I want you to know that we enjoy great partnerships between the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and the Oregon State Police. I think we can be very proud of our strong partnerships at every level in public safety, but partnerships alone cannot address our lack of policing resources around the state. Oregon has the lowest number of police officers

(city, county and state) per 1000 population in the United States. As Superintendent Hampton mentioned in his testimony, there are large areas of the state where we cannot provide 24 hour police coverage. For this reason, I testified in support of HB 2046 on behalf of our association. As you know, this bill would build a plan for adequately staffing the Oregon State Police through the 10-year plan envisioned in the bill. Our communities and our citizens throughout the state benefit from OSP's presence on our state highways and their ability to respond to crashes, DUII drivers and speeders.

Our Police Chiefs and Sheriffs in Oregon consider the Oregon State Police an essential and critical part of our public safety system in Oregon. They are the backbone that connects us and the partner that allows us to create safe highways, interstates and communities. We urge you to adequately fund the Oregon State Police so they can fulfill their mission.

Thank you for your consideration!