



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

From: Sheriff Craig Roberts, President
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Date: February 28, 2019

**Re: Oregon State Sheriffs' Association - Letter in Support of SB 5530,
Relating to the financial administration of the Department of State
Police**

For the record, my name is Craig Roberts. I am the Clackamas County Sheriff and serve as the President of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association. I am here today on behalf of the OSSA to encourage your support for the Oregon State Police budget.

As the President of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association and as the Sheriff of the third largest county in the state, I can tell you that the services of the Oregon State Police (OSP) are critical to maintaining public safety in Clackamas County and in speaking with Sheriffs statewide, I know that OSP services have a direct and positive impact on public safety across the state.

Sheriffs rely on the resources of OSP every day and we feel it operationally when there is a reduction in OSP service levels. I have been in law enforcement for over 30 years and I have seen the real impact of those staff reductions in my own county. Frankly, when that happens I can tell you that we don't have the personnel to pick up any additional law enforcement services. We are stretched too thin and I know my fellow Sheriffs are in the same situation.

The reality is, many Oregon law enforcement agencies struggle to maintain sufficient numbers to meet ever increasing calls for service as Oregon's population continues to grow. As service level demands increase, the operational role OSP plays in keeping our community safe is substantial. Without OSP's patrol assistance and capacity to cover, especially in our rural areas, we could not meet the demand for service.

In talking to more rural Sheriffs, I am told that OSP assistance related to fatal crash investigations and DUII enforcement is critical. Furthermore, there are a number of communities in Oregon that have no 24-hour police service and they rely on the services of OSP for emergency response. Any reduction in OSP service impacts these communities directly, sometimes removing the only law enforcement resource they may have available.

In addition to patrol assistance, in my own county, our Major Crimes Team relies on the depth of OSP's investigative experience and access to statewide resources to assist in follow-up investigative leads around the state. To put this in recent context, as a member of our Major Crimes Team, an OSP investigator is currently one of four lead investigators on the quadruple homicide that occurred in our county in the early part of this year. OSP's investigative assistance was also critical in the deadly cougar attack that occurred in the Mt. Hood Recreation Area last year.

Likewise, since 2006 OSP has been an active partner in our Clackamas County Interagency Task Force (CCITF) which is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of mid-to-high level Drug Trafficking Organizations. And OSP contributes investigators to a number of other drug task forces across the state. Working these complex drug cases cannot be done by any one agency alone. It's by having multiagency teams along with OSP that give us the most impact against drug trafficking statewide.

There are countless other ways OSP is essential to sheriffs' operations from crash reconstruction to cover in our rural communities. Given the ever increasing demands of calls for service, sheriffs' offices simply cannot cover what OSP does, and we cannot do it without them.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig Roberts

Clackamas County Sheriff
President, Oregon State Sheriffs' Association