



February 27, 2019

Joint Ways & Means Committee

Public Safety Subcommittee

Salem, Oregon

Re: Senate Bill 5530

Co-Chairs and Members:

My name is Janelle Lawrence and I serve as Executive Director of Oregon Impact. Oregon Impact ensure that our littlest Oregonians are in properly fitted car seats and riding safely on our roadways, that teens are provided with educational experiences to understand the consequences of impaired and distracted driving, and that adults are given the tools to guide them.

Oregon Impact supports the Governor's Recommended Budget for Oregon State Police for 2019-21. We are long overdue in investing in adequate state trooper coverage on our roadways. You will hear many reasons today why greater state trooper coverage is important on Oregon highways, but I want to focus on just one reason: More state troopers will result in less impaired and distracted driving.

Recent Oregon traffic safety statistics are troubling. During the past five years, serious traffic injuries are up 22 percent. Speeding-related fatalities are up 38 percent. Overall traffic fatalities are up 47 percent. And alcohol-impaired driving fatalities are up a whopping 75 percent.

When families have lost someone in a crash, they come to us at Oregon Impact, and they share heartbreaking stories. They want to help other families not experience what they have endured. They spend hours wondering if they had said I love you, the last time they saw their loved one that is now gone, how they will piece together their shattered lives

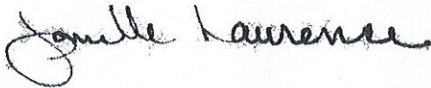
after the loss of a child, and how will a child who has lost a parent ever understand how wonderful they truly were?

Oregon Impact's primary goal is prevention. The evidence is clear that more state troopers patrolling and enforcing laws on Oregon highways will help prevent Oregon drivers – especially younger drivers – from driving while impaired or distracted. Investing more state resources in state troopers will save money by preventing traffic crashes – and it will save lives.

Senate Bill 5530 makes an important first step toward restoring 24/7 trooper coverage on our highways. For too many decades, OSP service has been under-prioritized and overlooked, resulting in unpatrolled highways attracting impaired and distracted drivers. The 2019 Legislative Session is the perfect opportunity to change that course.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for your commitment to improving our state's investment in state troopers and preventing impaired and distracted driving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janelle Lawrence". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Janelle Lawrence, Executive Director