



OREGON ASSOCIATION CHIEFS OF POLICE
EXCELLENCE IN POLICING

PO Box 21719 Keizer OR 97307



OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
JOIN . SERVE . PROTECT .

PO Box 7468 Salem OR 97303

To: Members of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Equitable Policing

From: Sheriff Mark Garton
Polk County Sheriff's Office
On behalf of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association
and the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police
garton.mark@co.polk.or.us

Date: February 8, 2021

Re: Testimony identifying concerns re HB 2481 – Military Surplus Equipment

Chair Bynum and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association (OSSA) and the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police (OACP), thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 2481. We can support the vast majority of HB 2481 but have the following concern:

Oregon Law Enforcement has relied on the Federal Military Surplus Equipment program to obtain light armored vehicles at little to no cost. These armored vehicles are used by Oregon Law Enforcement in response to a very limited number of critical incidents where active shooters and armed suspects pose a danger to the community or law enforcement officers and where use of the vehicle can result in safe and peaceful outcome. Examples of these high-risk incidents include hostage negotiations, barricaded subjects, school shootings, mass shootings and rescue missions.

In hostage situations, an armored vehicle is capable of bringing the hostage negotiator safely into proximity to a suspect. They are often able to diffuse the situation while they are protected within the vehicle and can communicate with the suspect via a PA system. In the case of school shootings or other active shooter incidents, an armored vehicle can safely transport officers to the scene. When medical personnel are needed, an armored vehicle can safely transport doctors or other medical personnel to tend to a downed citizen or officer from the safety of the vehicle. In natural disasters, armored vehicles can be used to safely reach and extract people who are in harms way when other emergency vehicles are incapable of reaching the location.

Without access to these kinds of vehicles from the Federal Military Surplus Equipment Program, most Oregon law enforcement agencies will have no motorized ballistic protection as they respond to and address these types of critical incidents. Civilian versions of these vehicles are extremely expensive and most Oregon agencies cannot afford them. Eliminating light armored vehicles through this program will put Oregon law enforcement and Oregonians at risk.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions you have.