



OREGON ASSOCIATION CHIEFS OF POLICE

EXCELLENCE IN POLICING

PO Box 21719 Keizer OR 97307

To: Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Chloe Campbell, Government Affairs Manager
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police
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Date: March 7th, 2023

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 48 – Support for Restoring Truancy Tool

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. For the record, my name is Chloe Campbell, and I am here today on behalf of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police to offer testimony in support of SB 48.

In 2021, SB 817 eliminated the penalty for compulsory school attendance violations as part of an omnibus bill that eliminated a significant number of administrative fines and fees that have an impact on youth and their families. While we support the intent of SB 817 and share the concern about the impact of excessive fees on those who are navigating our criminal justice system, we were surprised to learn that the measure eliminated the truancy penalty without a meaningful discussion with all interested and involved parties. As you know, between the special sessions in 2020 through the short session in 2022, the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police actively engaged in a robust process with many of you that resulted in passage of 20 police reform measures. We weren't aware of this change in statute until after the session ended in 2021. We appreciate the willingness of this committee to revisit this policy and to consider restoring these truancy provisions.

Truancy laws with appropriate penalties are effective because they provide a legal framework and accountability that helps ensure that children attend school regularly. Truancy, or chronic absenteeism from school, can have serious negative consequences for a student's academic performance, social development, and future opportunities. We believe that the Truancy tool provides opportunities for schools, social service organizations and public safety to partner together to offer encouragement and accountability for families to support their child's education. Truancy laws also help to ensure that students who are struggling with attendance receive the support and resources they need to stay on track academically. Ultimately, truancy laws are an important tool for promoting educational attainment and helping students to succeed in school and beyond. Faced with the prospect of a penalty for truancy, parents are motivated to engage, and most students return to regular school attendance without the need to access a fine.

For the reasons listed above, the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police support SB 48 as introduced.

Thank you for your consideration, and for the opportunity to testify.