



OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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PO Box 7468 Salem OR 97303

To: Members of the House Business and Labor Committee

From: Sheriff Curtis Landers, President
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Date: March 13th, 2023

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 3205

Chair Holvey and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. For the record, my name is Curtis Landers. I am the Lincoln County Sheriff and I currently serve as the President of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association. I am here today to offer testimony in support of HB 3205.

Law enforcement agencies in Oregon are experiencing a profound workforce shortage due to a wave of retirements, departures of personnel leaving the profession altogether and dwindling applicant pools for new hires. This workforce challenge is more dire considering Oregon's status as one of the least policed states in the United States. Based on 2021 data, Oregon was ranked 50th in the nation with 1.48 officers per thousand population. Combined, these factors have forced many law enforcement agencies to focus almost exclusively on responding to life endangering calls for service due to low staffing.

Addressing this workforce crisis will require law enforcement agencies to have every tool available to attract and retain officers. Hiring and retention bonuses is an important option for agencies. We urge the legislature to restore this tool by permanently exempting hiring and retention bonuses from the Equal Pay Act. As you know, the ability to utilize this hiring tool was lost when the Governor's COVID state of emergency was ended in September of 2022.

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