

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and distinguished members of the committee.

My name is Kecia Weaver, on March 1<sup>st</sup> I retired after serving over 30 years as a police officer in Washington and Oregon. I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO's).

From 2015-2022 I served on the Community Response Team at the Bend Police Department. With a focus on mental health and crisis related calls, my team worked with individuals, families, mental health professionals and the criminal justice system in an effort to achieve better outcomes for people in mental health crisis who interacted with law enforcement. A strength of the team was developing good connections with community resources and local services so appropriate connections were made, not mere referrals.

My teammates and I applied for numerous ERPO's which were granted and assisted other officers in the process. I have seen this as a lifesaving tool when there is a belief that a person is at risk for suicide or causing harm to another person in the near future, based on specific conduct that can be outlined in an affidavit.

I have seen a shared desire, as well as duty, of family members, mental health professionals and law enforcement, to protect individuals, and the community, from potential violence when credible threats are made.

ERPO's have challenges: training, applicant and application issues, danger in serving the orders, compliance being largely voluntary as well as tracking of the orders.

I would like to speak about training and applicants. Law enforcement is required to protect communities, individual rights and are tasked with endless duties and trainings such as emergency driving, DUII processes, first aid, firearms, investigations, evidence collection and so much more. It's no wonder that not every officer, deputy or trooper is well versed in ERPO's.

I believe good quality training, such as the training created by Jake Chandler which I am proud to co-present, address issues such as respecting gun owner rights and due process and will increase the effective and appropriate use of ERPO's.

Helping others understand proper preparation for hearings, presentation of witnesses, addressing safety issues and more, will improve usage. These orders will be only as good as their successful use.

In my experience, I saw the value of law enforcement officers applying to obtain the orders through more organized, concise, professional testimony and presentation of evidence.

I've observed families are often quite desperate by the time they reach out to law enforcement. Family members have expressed to me the burden of having to research and complete a court document against a loved one who they may still live with and even fear. These family members provide valuable information. Many times, their additional testimony was not required due to a well founded affidavit. I believe this results in a more efficient use of the Court's time and would reduce unfounded filings.

I believe mental health professionals can provide the same high level of testimony on the rare occasions high risk to the public exists, or there is a high risk of suicide, which outweighs confidentiality. I'm an advocate for law enforcement working with behavioral health professionals in such cases.

I was involved in one ERPO process where the order was denied by a judge, yet a few days later the respondent called police, stating he did not feel he was safe or in the right state of mind to possess his firearms.

ERPO's cannot prevent all acts of self-harm or violence by individuals. Improved law enforcement training in Extreme Risk Protection Orders can result in more effective use of this lifesaving tool.