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EXCELLENCE IN POLICING

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To: Interim House and Senate Judiciary Committees

From: Chief Mike Krantz, Bend Police Department
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police

Sheriff Nick Hunter, Marion County Sheriff's Office
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Date: September 30th, 2025

Re: Testimony – Oregon Law Enforcement Identification Standards and Practices

Chairs Prozanski and Kropf and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of law enforcement officer identification and its critical role in strengthening community trust and police legitimacy across Oregon.

Clear and consistent officer identification is essential to maintain transparency, accountability, and public confidence in law enforcement. When officers are visibly identifiable—by name, badge number, or agency-issued identifier—it affirms the principles of democratic policing and procedural justice. This visibility is especially important during high-tension encounters, such as crowd management operations, where public trust and officer conduct are under heightened scrutiny.

Statutory Framework

Oregon law establishes clear identification standards:

- **ORS 181A.704** requires officers to identify themselves upon request when practical, safe, and tactically feasible. Officers must provide their name and identification number, or an agency-assigned identifier, which may be shared via an agency-issued business card. If a member of the public submits a request based on a badge number, photograph, vehicle plate, or physical description, the agency must acknowledge receipt within seven days and provide the officer's name and DPSST number within 14 days, unless safety or confidentiality is compromised. These provisions do not apply to undercover officers.

- **ORS 181A.702** applies to crowd management operations in cities with populations over 60,000. It requires officers to wear uniforms displaying their first initial and last name, or a unique identifier, on both the front and back. If wearing a tactical helmet, the identifier must also be displayed on the back. Exceptions are allowed only when identification would compromise safety or tactical effectiveness.

Policy and Practice

These statutory requirements are reinforced by widely adopted policy frameworks. For example, 160 of Oregon’s 174 agencies use **Lexipol**, which aligns agency policies with Oregon Revised Statutes, case law, and best practices. The Bend Police Department’s Uniform Regulations Policy 1024, developed through Lexipol, requires sworn personnel to display visible name tags, badges, and agency identifiers on uniforms and external vests, with identifiers also displayed on tactical helmets.

Agencies not using Lexipol apply similar standards grounded in ORS 181A.702 and ORS 181A.704. For instance, Marion County SWAT maintained consistent uniform markings prior to HB 3355 (2021) and, following its passage, added unique numerical identifiers to all SWAT members. Although required only for designated crowd-control assignments, these identifiers are now standard for all uniforms.

Professional Standards and Visibility

Recognizable, consistent uniforms and identifiers symbolize professionalism in public safety and reinforce the core values shared by police officers, sheriff’s deputies, and state troopers. Many agencies go beyond statutory requirements by incorporating contrasting colors or reflective materials, further increasing visibility and accountability. High visibility not only strengthens public trust but also enhances operational efficiency and officer safety by de-escalating volatile situations through clear and transparent presence.

Different assignments require different approaches to identification. For example, detectives may wear professional business attire for court or routine investigations but transition to uniforms and placards for search warrants or other public operations to ensure visibility. Unless specific safety concerns justify an exemption, uniform visibility and identification remain a priority across all functions.

Conclusion

Oregon law enforcement is committed to upholding the standards set forth in statute regarding officer visibility and identification. These practices are more than procedural requirements, they are fundamental to legitimacy, transparency, accountability, and professionalism. Agencies across the state will continue to prioritize clear identification as a cornerstone of building and maintaining public trust.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important topic.