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# Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

## *Conservators of the Peace*

Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is Jason Myers, I am the Marion County Sheriff and I am here today representing the Oregon State Sheriff's Association on Senate Bill 488.

This measure would require our county jails to offer, pay for and schedule a flu shot for all inmates at a time that is in accordance with medically accepted standards. Further, inmates who decide not to accept the immunization are required to do so in writing. These requirements would be costly and difficult to implement in our county jails for a number of reasons. As background, I would like to take a few minutes to explain the difference between our Oregon Jails and prisons, and how a requirement like this can add to jail medical costs that are growing faster than local resources.

Jails hold three kinds of inmates; pretrial detainees, sanctioned offenders and sentenced offenders. Unlike prison, Jails are short term holding facilities. To give you an example, inmates lodged at my jail stay an average of 17 days. My jail has 415 beds and each year 15,000 individuals are booked into the jail. As you can imagine there is a lot movement and individuals do not typically stay in custody for long. The primary reason that Oregon law has long required correctional facilities to provide emergency medical and dental care to inmates is that the inmates cannot leave the facility to obtain those services on their own. Obviously, that is especially true in the Oregon Dept. of Corrections (DOC), where inmates are held for more than a year. Given our short average length of stay, the reality is that almost all our inmates are only out of the community for a short period of time. Unlike DOC inmates, jail inmates have opportunities to obtain a flu shot, if they desire, either before or after their short stay in jail. That is a much different dynamic than DOC inmates, who spend years in much larger and more crowded facilities and who truly are dependent upon the State to provide for every medical need.

Over the past several years, medical costs for our jail inmate population have been increasing at a rate faster than local resources are increasing. In our economically strained counties, a mandate like this, that doesn't come with funding to implement it, would have a significant impact on local budgets.

In closing, I'd like to reaffirm that the welfare of inmates is a top priority of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association. For the reasons stated in my testimony, we believe the requirements in SB 488 are more appropriate for state correctional facilities and would be very difficult and costly to implement in our county jails.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.