



**To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee**

**From: Chief Jim Ferraris, Woodburn Police Department**  
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and the  
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

**Date:** March 7, 2019

**Re: Support for HB 2797 – "Taylor's Law"**

Chair Williamson and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

For the record, my name is Jim Ferraris and I am the Chief of Police for the City of Woodburn. I currently serve as the Vice President of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police (OACP) and I am here on behalf of the OACP and the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association to offer testimony in support of HB 2797, also known as "Taylor's Law".

This is my 41st year of serving as an Oregon law enforcement officer, having worked for police departments in Beaverton, Portland, Salem and Woodburn. Most of my career has been devoted to drug related treatment, prevention and enforcement efforts. In addition to decades of drug enforcement work, I've spent nearly the past 20 years as part of Lines for Life (L4L), an organization committed to ending substance abuse and suicide.

The drug overdose landscape in Oregon is disheartening at best. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports Oregon drug overdose deaths numbered 530 during 2017 and increased in Oregon by about 4.2% between 2016 and 2017. Information from the CDC suggests that the number of overdose deaths in Oregon will continue to rise in coming years, as the CDC data clearly shows these deaths steadily increasing from 210 in 1999 to 530 in 2017.

HB 2797 or Taylor's Law was created in memory of 24-year old Taylor Martinek, who became addicted to opioids after suffering an athletic injury in college. Taylor died two years ago because he overdosed on what he thought was OxyContin and Xanax, but actually the pills contained a lethal dose of Fentanyl, a highly potent synthetic opioid. While any overdose death is a tragedy, Taylor's death really hit home for me. I had known Taylor since he was a small boy. His father, Brian and I have been friends and professional colleagues for thirty years.

Currently, there is no punishment under Oregon law for a person who sells or provides a controlled substance resulting in another person's death from the use of that controlled substance. Current sentencing guidelines for drug related homicide carry little sanction for the offender, and under current law the usual presumptive sentence involved is probation. In the case of Taylor's death, one of the suspects prosecuted in Washing County received 12 months' probation, while another only received 26 months in prison. That in itself is just plain wrong. Taylor's Law will address the existing gap in Oregon law and provide a measure of accountability, through minimum mandatory prison sentencing, to the profiteer drug dealer whose drug peddling actions causes the death of another human being.

Please understand that Taylor's Law does not focus on people who are drug addicted and are in need of medical treatment for their illness. That's not what this bill is about. Taylor's Law focuses on the drug profiteer who knowingly exploits the drug addicted, allowing law enforcement and prosecutors to target those high level drug dealers who sell illegal drugs to line their own pockets purely for financial gain. These deaths are preventable. Ensuring addicted people receive treatment is one avenue of approach. Another necessary avenue is to hold those drug dealing profiteers accountable in the criminal justice system.

Thank you for your consideration.