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RE: HB 3338 - written testimony

Chair Barker, Vice Chairs Olson and Williamson, Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Meggie Kirchner, and I would ask that my written testimony be included as part of the official record of your public hearing on HB 3338. I am a recent graduate of Portland State University and am currently a first year law student at Lewis & Clark Law School. I am writing to encourage your opposition to HB 3338. This bill, while written as if it's directed at all seven of the public universities in Oregon is discriminatory because it would apply to only two specific public universities - Portland State and University of Oregon. If passed, this bill would jeopardize the safety of students, faculty, and staff and will create huge burdens on not only the universities but the cities where they are located.

Portland State is not a safe campus. Since I first enrolled at PSU the safety of the campus has diminished greatly. I lived on campus for two years and have seen first-hand the drastic safety concerns on campus. I never felt safe on campus. The lack of resources for the homeless population and the mentally ill have caused them to utilize PSU as their own personal shelter. Students have consistently been attacked, harassed, and followed. The majority of safety concerns on PSU' campus come from non-students. My freshman year, my roommate was targeted in the library when an individual followed her into the library, started recording her on his cellphone, while he began masturbating in the library. There were instances where non-students pulled guns on students as they were walking to their building and right outside one of the housing buildings I lived in my sophomore year. Even more recently, CPSO announced that an individual was filming people in the bathroom. Besides the safety concerns due to criminal activity, there are also huge safety concerns because of the drug use from non-students coming on to campus. I can not tell you how many times I have found drug paraphernalia scattered all over campus - outside buildings, inside buildings, inside parking structures, inside bathrooms, inside classrooms, and in every little nook and cranny someone could find. There have also been instances where I have seen individuals shooting up at night on campus. There are also individuals who take it upon themselves to use public places at PSU, like the Urban Plaza as their own personal bathroom and will urinate and defecate there during all hours of the day.

I have lived in Portland my whole life and have always felt safe in my neighborhood, even when I was living in a more sketchy area of Southeast Portland. I have never felt safe at PSU and started carrying pepper spray because of the lack of safety I felt. I have many friends who are still at PSU who say they avoid campus unless they have class just because they do not feel safe on campus. Please believe me when I say PSU is a wonderful university and an amazing place to get an education, but it is unsafe and students are very worried about their safety.

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I do not write all of these safety concerns to deter individuals from attending PSU. I hope to inform you of the serious safety problems that students face on a daily basis so you may better understand why PSU **does** need an armed police force. The size of PSU's campus, the location of PSU's campus, and the number of students at PSU really benefit from having a sworn police force. Back when PSU did not have a sworn police force, they had to rely on Portland Police Bureau for everything. This took a lot of time and costs the city extra money when, if PSU had sworn officers, it could have been handled by the university.

Recently, my sophomore year, when PSU did not have 24/7 sworn officer coverage, I participated on an evening ride-along with a security officer at PSU. The security officers are not sworn police officers. During this ride along we ran into an individual who had just been released from jail, who was trespassing and menacing students and property on campus over five times. The **third time** we received a dispatch call about this individual, the security officer I was with radioed dispatch to contact PPB to come and remove this individual from campus. Dispatch told us they let PPB know and PPB would come when they could. **About 15 minutes later we got another call from dispatch about the same individual.** Again, the security officer had dispatch contact PPB about coming and removing this individual from campus. Again, PPB told dispatch they would be there when they could. **About 10 minutes later we received the fifth dispatch call about this individual.** At this time the security officer realized that this individual really needed to be removed from campus but because of his status as a security officer, **he could not arrest or physically remove this individual.** He radioed dispatch and had them place a call to PPB, and again PPB said they would be there when they could. Because of the multiple times we had called for PPB, the security officer stayed with this individual and kept telling him that he needed to leave. At this time, he got agitated and started making offensive and threatening comments towards me and tried lunging at me multiple times. All the security officer could do was stand in between me and this individual. **My safety was seriously threatened while I was with a security officer from CPSO.** There was nothing that the security officer could legally do to protect me at that moment without jeopardizing his job because he was not a sworn officer. At this point the security officer became agitated and was able to patch through to someone at PPB directly and PPB arrived about 5 minutes later to arrest this individual. **All in all, from the first time we called in for PPB to the time he got arrested, it took close to an hour and a half for PPB to respond.**

Sworn officers at PSU alleviate this problem. They are able to quickly respond to the needs of students and handle the situation in an appropriate manner. They know the workings of campus inside and out and are able to factor that in when responding to a situation. Furthermore, CPSO at PSU go through additional trainings that are not required by DPSST in order to adequately meet the needs of the PSU community. These trainings include mental Officer Safety, Crisis Intervention, Title IX (provided by PSU's Global Diversity and Inclusion Division), Supervisor Liability, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), Active Threat Integrated Response (provided by Texas State University), Ethics, Review of Policies, Traffic Stop Protocols, Firearms Qualification, Hostage Negotiation, Defensive Tactics, managing Police Records, Traffic Incident Management, Employee Interviewing, Video Analysis for

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Investigators, CPR/First Aid. Additionally, the officers have participated in trainings on Marginalized Populations, Implicit Bias, Micro-Aggression, LGBTQ Awareness, Disability Awareness, Sexual Assault Investigations, Conflict Resolution, Verbal De-escalation, Less than Lethal Applications, Media Interviews, Forensic Video Analysis, Tactical Medicine and Threat Assessments. CPSO is engrained in the PSU community as they have started an internship program, attended all sporting events, maintain a twitter page to communicate with students and highlight what CPSO is doing, and just walk around campus talking to students and being friendly with them. All of the individuals at PSU's CPSO are amazing and are some of the best people on campus, and many of them are either PSU Alum or are taking classes at PSU.

PSU and UofO are not alone in having sworn campus police. In 2015, The Guardian reported that over 2/3 of public and private universities have campus police and that officers at public universities were twice as likely to carry guns. (<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jan/20/more-campus-police-officers-now-carry-guns-report-finds>) Could you imagine universities like UCLA or University of Washington not having sworn police officers? In an ideal world, an officer, no matter if they are a police officer or a campus police officer, would ever have to fire their weapon. But we do not live in an ideal world and situations arise where officers need to be carrying a weapon, whether it is to protect their own safety or the safety of the community. Campus police officers need their weapons. Stripping officers of their weapons would greatly inhibit their ability to respond to emergency situations on campus. Furthermore, only allowing officers to have their weapons in police headquarters makes absolutely no sense and has no logical basis. Emergencies do not come to police officers, police officers come to emergencies so to prevent an officer from carrying his weapon to adequately respond to an emergency is illogical and creates huge safety concerns for students.

If you pass this bill, you will cripple the safety of PSU students, faculty, and staff. This bill would also deter students from coming to PSU because of their safety concerns. This would mean a loss of money for PSU and for the city. Please do not pass this bill. If my personal accounts are not persuasive enough, I implore you to spend a full day on PSU's campus by yourself. Get there at 7 in the morning and stay till about 10 at night and just wander and watch by yourself. You will immediately notice multiple safety concerns and will immediately realize why campus police are the saving grace of PSU.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to me. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

*Meggie Kirchner*

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