

**TESTIMONY ON SB 297
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
APRIL 29, 2021**

**PRESENTED BY: EVAN WEST, CHIEF MARSHAL
OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT**

Chair Bynum, Vice Chairs Noble and Power, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Evan West, and I am the Chief Marshal for the Oregon Judicial Department Marshal's Office. I am testifying in support of SB 297.

I have been with this office since 2007. When the office became a law enforcement unit in 2012, I was sworn in as a deputy marshal. I graduated from the DPSST Basic Police Academy and completed my field training through the Oregon State Police.

In 2015, I was sworn in as the Chief Marshal and currently hold an executive police certification through DPSST.

Initially, the transition to a law enforcement unit was for obtaining access to law enforcement sensitive information for judicial threat assessment awareness and assisting with judicial protection. The transition was successful, but it became evident that there was a need for a more robust law enforcement mission within OJD.

After the 2013 legislative change that included judicial marshals in the statutory definition of peace officer, the office transformed from security and preparedness to a law enforcement office. All judicial marshals are required to have and maintain police certification through DPSST and are cross-trained in several law enforcement disciplines.

Judicial marshals manage threat assessment cases for judges and staff across the state, perform protection details for the appellate courts, provide physical security in the Supreme Court and Justice Building, respond to all law enforcement calls for service at those locations, provide community care-taking and emergency aid duties, and retain full arrest powers throughout the state. The three judicial marshals responded to 226 incidents in 2020, ranging from drug activity and theft to people in mental health crisis and medical emergencies. The judicial marshals also train other law enforcement departments on court security, and dignitary protection.

The Marshal's Office works in partnership with federal, state, and local law enforcement. This ranges from working on protection details with the Oregon State Police, to courthouse security assessments with Sheriff's Offices, to managing threat assessment cases with the US Secret Service.

The Marshal's Office strives to only hire police certified individuals with specialty training in fields like threat assessment. However, this has proven to be a challenge. We ask judicial marshals to assume the risks and liability of being police officers, without offering them Police and Fire PERS. Convincing someone to leave P/F to come work for us is not an easy sell. Of the original 3 sworn marshals, I am the only one left.

This concludes my testimony. I am available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.