



LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

121 Mystic Avenue, Suite 9
Medford, Massachusetts 02155
T: (781) 393.6985

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Date: February 22, 2021

Re: HB 3145 - Relating to records; declaring an emergency.

Position: SUPPORT

To: The Oregon House Subcommittee on Equitable Policing

Dear Subcommittee Members:

As law enforcement in Ohio, we are writing to express our support for HB 3145 in Oregon. We believe that transparency of police misconduct records is benefiting law enforcement in our state and would do the same in Oregon.

In addition to our public safety careers, we are speakers for the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP). LEAP is a nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by improving police-community relations.

We urge you to support HB 3145, which directs the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to maintain a database of misconduct and discipline records for public safety employees. Currently, Oregon residents have extremely limited access to such records, unlike residents of Ohio and about 19 other states that provide public access. We believe that Ohio's example shows that Oregon would benefit from passing this legislation to increase misconduct record transparency.

In fact, we believe that this bill would make Oregon's police more effective. Without transparency in policing, the public will not trust us, which makes our job harder. Shining a light on officer misconduct and how it is investigated by departments is a necessary first step towards improving police-community trust in Oregon.

Police-community trust is central to public safety. In order for police to prevent and solve crime, we need witnesses to come forward and we need

LawEnforcementActionPartnership.org

Formerly known as Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

crime survivors to speak to investigators and testify. We cannot do our jobs if the public will not open the door when we come knocking.

The trust issue is particularly important in communities of color. Police killings of Black people, from George Floyd in Minneapolis to Kevin Peterson in Oregon, have sparked a protest movement. Raising the veil on complaints filed against officers will help to improve cooperation between law enforcement and communities of color.

Finally, opening misconduct records would benefit Oregon's officers directly. It would allow them to see if disciplinary action is fairly administered throughout their department.

We hope that Ohio can be an example for Oregon in improving police-community trust by making police misconduct records available to the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our experience in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Chief Tom Synan
Newtown Police Department, OH

Assistant Chief Tom Thompson (Ret.)
Miamisburg Police Department, OH
Retired Chief, Kettering Health Network Police Department