



LOCAL 3743

February 12, 2021

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislative Judicial Committee,

After reviewing House Bill 2002 the Parole and Probation Officers in Douglas County would like to express our concerns about the potential changes.

Parole and Probation officers are the front-line barriers in our community between the criminal element and the citizens. Our members are dedicated and highly trained in working with Adults on Supervision to change criminal behaviors and thinking to become productive members of the community. We are also the mechanism to hold convicted criminals accountable when their behaviors become a risk to themselves and their community.

Here in Douglas County we train monthly in firearms safety, accuracy, and responsibility and regularly in defensive tactics, de-escalation techniques, updated use of force case law and scenario-based trainings to avoid altercations and end events with the least amount of force necessary.

We strongly feel, based on our expertise and experiences, that many of the changes proposed by House Bill 2002, will not only put officer's lives and safety at risk but also have tragic consequences for our law-abiding citizens.

Regarding HB 2002 Section 27 (2):

Parole and probation officers shall ensure that clothing worn while engaged in official duties does not resemble the uniform of a peace officer.

We would ask that the Judicial Committee recognize that by the nature of our duties the vast majority of the contacts that we have while in the community are with Criminal Offenders who have already shown an unwillingness to comply with the laws set forth by the State of Oregon. Many of those have already demonstrated a propensity for violence and disregard for authority.

When we are in the field, our uniform distinguishes us from the general public. This ensures when a physical altercation or arrest occurs, induced by the Adult on Supervision, that we are

identified by arriving back up officers or the general public and not confused with a citizen in an altercation with another citizen. Simply having the ability to be identified upon arrival at any location, can prevent problems from arising, identifies us as the authority figure in the situation, and assists us in de-escalating dangerous scenarios. Our contacts are regularly with a portion of the population that is deeply engaged in criminal activities and this means that any field contact or home visit can become unfriendly or confrontational. Having the ability to wear identifiers and protective gear allows us to feel protected and safe guarded from harm and be more effective in protecting ourselves and the citizens of our communities. Unfortunately, we now live in a society that has seen more anti-law enforcement rhetoric and because of that, our professions have been plagued with more dangers and more resistance.

Regarding HB 2002 Section 28 (2)(a)(b)

Restrictions for carrying firearms **(a) At or in locations in which persons seek social services or public benefits: or (b) At or in a supervised person's place of employment.**

Limiting locations where Parole and Probation Officers can carry their firearms while performing official duties can and will place officers' lives and safety at risk, particularly in rural areas like the ones we serve. We adamantly attest that banning tools intended to keep officers safe will certainly open the State up to injury or death liabilities.

Although on site employer contacts are rare in our community; machine shops, construction sites, logging sites, and factories can be some of the most dangerous areas to go to. Banning an officer from carrying a firearm while they travel miles out on a mountainside to a logging site, often without cell phone or radio coverage, sends the message that your officer's safety is not important. Most of our employers in Douglas County are aware that their employee is on supervision and many of them are receiving tax breaks for that hire. Most employer contacts are cordial and intended to assist the employer in maintaining that employee on their staff. However, the risk of contacting an Adult on Supervision at their worksite, when the contact may be adversarial, puts the officer at a huge disadvantage without all their tools.

Regarding HB 2002 Section 31

(b) Elimination of General condition #2 Not use or possess controlled substances except pursuant to a medical prescription and;

(j) (i) Obey all laws, municipal, county, state and federal, **except that with regard to the possession and use of controlled substances, the probation shall follow the state law.**

It is no secret that most property crimes and violence in our state are driven by criminal thinking and addiction to mind-altering substances. The avenue and incentive to engage these offenders in substance abuse treatment has long been supervision and direction through

Community Corrections agencies. Our communities have not yet even fully begun to realize the consequences of BM110 which took away any incentive for individuals to engage in treatment. A large majority of our clientele are not just addicts, but criminal addicts that use manipulation and justification tactics to get what they want, often in the way of criminal activity. Much of this criminal activity is driven by their addiction and without a consequence for their behaviors, the incentive to participate in any programming that is designed to help them recover from their past will be absolutely guaranteeing that they get stuck in their behaviors. It is imperative that that addicts, particularly criminal addicts, have uncomfortable consequences for their substance abuse in order to incentivize their participation in treatment and recovery. A criminal addict, referred to treatment, with the express permission to continue to use controlled substances is not being treated at all.

Regarding HB 2002 (several areas)

Limiting jail sanctions for certain conditions and limiting revocations to **willfully absconding or committing new felony crimes or a person Class A misdemeanor.**

Community Corrections and specifically Oregon Department of Corrections agencies have been working diligently for several years to decrease the number of revocations of probation for technical violations. Prior to any sanction, we consider numerous factors, including; assessed risk level, violation level, risk to the community and history on supervision before any determination of sanction is made.

Once again, limiting sanctioning or revocation options only continues to put the community at risk and reduce the effectiveness of supervision. One of our members shared a perfect example. If we are supervising a client for multiple DUI's and he/she is contacted by law enforcement, highly intoxicated, walking towards their vehicle, the law enforcement officer has no authority to arrest that client as they have not yet done anything illegal. The probation officer, however, is aware of that client's history and willingness to put the community at risk and can intervene with a short jail sanction to keep the community safe from his/her behaviors immediately.

Taking these tools away from us will only serve to increase criminal manipulation tactics. Often it is the threat of consequence that externalizes the change process. Rarely, does the change process in criminal offenders include initial internal motivation and taking away the external motivators will only serve to increase criminality, recidivism, and reduce our successes.

Regarding HB 2002

Expanding Earned Discharge for Alternative Incarceration Adults in Custody.

It is a privilege to be allowed to finish incarceration on AIP or other transitional leave, however, even an Adult on Supervision with the highest level of criminal thinking can play the wait and comply tactic on transitional leave. Often, we do not start observing the return to criminal behaviors until just after Adults in Custody are officially released to PPS. It is often the length of PPS time that allows the Parole Officer time to intervene and address these behaviors before their unsupervised return to the community.

We sincerely hope that the committee hear and understand our concerns and engage with the front-line workers prior to making any rash decisions that will affect our professions, safety, and the community. We are always willing to have conversations and to inform the public and the committee of the job that we do in the trenches.

On behalf of our members and the communities we serve,



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