



# Federation of Oregon Parole & Probation Officers

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PO Box 948 Canby, Oregon 97013

Chair Bynum and members of the committee, my name is Nick Reiten. I am a domestic violence Probation Officer from Jackson County and the President of the Federation of Oregon Parole and Probation Officers. Within House Bill 2002, there are several proposed changes that will significantly affect the safety of victims, the community and Probation Officers. Looking through the bill, I want to address the issues regarding the appearance of officers, carrying firearms, revocation restrictions and custody availability for controlled substances.

Currently, an officer's appearance is dictated by department policies that account for their assignments and the community they serve. We are required to perform a wide range of tasks within the community, from rehabilitation to back up for other law enforcement officers. Being able to be quickly identified while performing these tasks in the community is important to the safety of those under supervision, community members and officers alike. Without the ability to be quickly identified as an officer, we can encounter individuals that can be very confrontational and hostile about our presence without knowing our identity. Additionally, clear identification was critical this fall when several probation departments provided vital support to their communities and other law enforcement agencies during the fires that ravished our state. This demonstrated the need to be clearly recognizable as law enforcement within our communities.

Restricting the ability of DPSST certified officers to carry a firearm in the proposed locations creates an unneeded risk to our officers. The vast majority of visits to places of employment and social service locations are in response to significant violations like new criminal conduct, victim contact or attempting to locate a person prior to requesting a warrant. Each of these issues increase the potential risk of that contact. Additionally, many people in rural Oregon live where they are employed, like farmers, fisherman and mechanics. The joint residence/employment dynamic is increasing across the state due to the pandemic. This proposal would impact officers' ability to protect themselves during a home visit. Furthermore, many of our probation offices are located within public buildings that provide public services to the community and even treatment programs. This proposal is focused only on optics and not a tangible safety concern to the community.

Narrowing the scope of revocations to new criminal convictions and willful absconds greatly impacts those survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual assaults and other victims of crime. The new proposal would require the person under supervision to be convicted of a new crime before they can be held accountable for their first assault. This is an egregious violation of their personal safety and physical & mental wellbeing. In removing the option of custody for the use of controlled substances, it will have a significant impact on victim safety. Admission of drug use may be the only option to remove a domestic violence abuser from a situation and provide safety to the survivor. While custody should always be the last option for substance use, it is an important tool to have available. In responding to violations of domestic violence and sexual assaults, we need to have all options accessible for a survivor centered approach while working with the justice involved individual.

Thank you Chair Bynum and members of the House Judiciary Committee for your time.