

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2002
Oregon House Judiciary Committee

My name is Steve Monroe. I am a probation officer and a member of the Federation of Oregon Parole and Probation Officers. I would like to address several serious concerns with issues related to Senate Bill 2002 and how it would impact not just probation officers statewide in Oregon but the client base that we serve. Concerning restrictions when and where you can carry a firearm and restricting an officer's ability to wear any clothing that resembles the uniform of a peace officer is a serious safety issue for officers and the community at large. As law enforcement officers across the spectrum of different departments there is no section of society that is deemed safe or off limits to situations that would put an officer's as well as citizens' life at risk.

When I initially became a probation officer in 2013 I had to deal with not wearing clothing identifying me as a peace officer. My agency's prior director years ago mandated that we wear our weapons concealed under our civilian clothes. As an African American that did not go well for me as I attempted to conduct home contacts or field investigations. I would show up in my personal clothes and I was met with people letting their dogs loose on me, being cussed out and in general no matter what race you are people are very paranoid and downright aggressive when "strangers" come on their property especially in a rural the community that we service. That uniform or labeling is a first line of defense for the officer. I get there is massive social issues from the public and push back related to unjustifiable police violence that has clearly been identified but changing a shirt out is not the answer.

The other two issues of revoking clients only for willful absconding and commission of persons crime along with removing any custody ability for GC2 is harmful to the clients themselves. Not only am I a certified Probation Officer, I am also a certified CADAC 1 Drug & Alcohol counselor. I also have 18 years clean and sober. I lived on the streets in the Bay Area homeless for years as I was stuck in a vicious addiction cycle so I can speak on this with integrity and factuality. Every crime or violation a person gets away with only builds a "hard callous of criminality and addiction" between those crimes you say we should respond to. House Bill 2002 mandates only emboldens and solidifies anti-social and pro-criminal behavior that will be that much harder to address. It's been my personal and professional experience that people don't change because of a conversation or providing resources, they change because of consequences.

In summary, House Bill 2002 is misguided and based on punishment of the whole instead of focusing on what can work. What can work is written right in the Bill! Ongoing education of law enforcement is a brilliant first start. Let's start somewhere we can all agree as partners instead of adversaries for the better good of our mutual communities in the State of Oregon. We can all win if we work together as partners!

Thank you in advance for considering my opinion in your ongoing deliberations

Sincerely,

Steven Monroe
Probation Officer/CADAC I
Josephine County Community Corrections