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To: Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

From: Pat Garrett, Washington County Sheriff
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association
Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police

Date: January 31, 2023

**Re: HB 2645 (with adoption of the dash 1 amendment)
Testimony in Support (Fentanyl Penalties)**

Chair Kropf and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Pat Garrett. I am the Sheriff of Washington County and I am here today testifying on behalf of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association (OSSA) and the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police (OACP) in support of HB 2645 with adoption of the dash 1 amendment.

According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid typically used to treat patients with chronic severe pain or severe pain following surgery. Fentanyl is a Schedule II controlled substance that is like morphine but about 100 times more potent. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, synthetic opioids (like fentanyl) are the primary driver of overdose deaths in the United States. We are seeing overdose deaths from fentanyl in Washington County on a weekly basis.

Communities throughout Oregon are experiencing an epidemic of Fentanyl use and abuse that is leaving tragedy, death, and broken lives in its wake. This powerful drug poses a deadly risk not only to users but to anyone who may encounter the substance either knowingly or unknowingly. This risk comes to those experimenting with substance misuse, those with long term substance use disorder, and everything in between. This morning, I would like to share a few examples of the effects of Fentanyl use that we are seeing in Washington County to reinforce the importance of HB 2645.

Last December, while home from college during winter break, a 22-year-old female ingested a single blue pill from an acquaintance. Her family found her deceased in their home one morning just before Christmas.

A 19-year-old Soldier home from duty in Germany died from a fentanyl overdose while sitting next to a friend on a TriMet bus in Tualatin after he ingested a small amount of what he thought was cocaine.

Friends of mine lost their 18-year-old son after he ingested a single pill given to him by an acquaintance who believed the pill was oxycontin, but it was fentanyl. The deceased young man was found in the family home by his younger brother the next morning. Investigators discovered the drug dealer in this case supplied many others, which led to at least two additional fatal fentanyl overdoses.

As context for your committee as you consider this important proposal, according to the DEA, **about 2 milligrams of fentanyl can be lethal, and an amount that can rest on the tip of a pencil** as seen in this DEA photograph.



Please join OSSA and OACP in supporting HB 2645 which will allow enforcement of possession of one gram or more of this very dangerous substance. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you for your consideration.