

February 14, 2023

TO: Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher and members of the committee

Subject: SB799 – Senate Judiciary Committee Public Testimony

I am submitting for the record my testimony regarding the merits of requiring all Police Officers, Deputy Sheriff's, Corrections Officers, Parole and Probation Officers, Regulatory Specialists, and Reserve Officers to complete post-secondary education.

I agree that in theory Law Enforcement Officers (LEO) with post-secondary education tend to write better and therefore provide better reports for DA prosecution. Having retired from a department that required a 4-year degree and having been a Field Training Officer for many years, I found this was sorely not the case. I will say the LEO's were able to read and understand the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) better than some without degrees. It also and perhaps this is the most important benefit was that the officers were usually older as they had to complete a 4-year degree and had more life experience (a couple of years) and maturity is very important in Law Enforcement.

My concern against this measure is that with education being equal the smaller departments will be in a worse position for staffing than they are now. With all Departments having the same education requirement, it will be easier for LEO's to jump from department to department for better pay and benefits. Making the smaller departments the training program for larger department recruitment. Also, the issue of pay, it will cost the smaller department more as most have incentive pay bonus for college graduates. Additionally, I would predict that salaries will have to increase with a 4-year degree requirement. Which could reduce the number of officers in the smaller departments due to budget constraints.

In our current environment of defunding the police, our community's failure to respect Law Enforcement and unfortunately the actions of a few bad officers getting national attention for bad acts. It is a very tough environment to recruit qualified candidates at this time without college degrees that can pass the background checks, psychological exams and the ORPAT (OREgon Physical Agility Test). Without adding an additional screening requirement, which will further restrict recruitment.



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