



OREGON ASSOCIATION CHIEFS OF POLICE
EXCELLENCE IN POLICING

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OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
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To: Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

From: Sheriff Mark Garton, Polk County Sheriff's Office
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Chief John Teague, Keizer Police Department
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police

Date: February 16, 2023

Re: Testimony in Support of the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) Budget – SB 5533

Co-Chairs Sollman and Evans and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association (OSSA) and the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police (OACP), thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 5533, the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Budget. DPSST is an agency that is mission and system critical to our entire public safety system. Law enforcement agencies throughout Oregon depend on the agency as our sole source of basic police officer training and certification.

DPSST is widely recognized throughout the nation as the "gold standard" for police officer training and certification and we are hopeful that this committee will fund the agency to continue to accomplish their important mission. In particular, we would like to urge the committee to protect DPSST from budget reductions, to fund the 20 basic police classes identified in the Governor's recommended budget, and to consider strategic investments in regional training.

Key DPSST Distinctives:

Core Training Academy: Unlike other states, Oregon uses one core academy for all police officer basic training. This model ensures that all police officers, regardless of their jurisdiction, receives the same, consistent, high-quality training. Another advantage of our approach to basic police officer training is that city police officers, county deputy sheriffs and Oregon State Police Troopers go through the 16-week training together. They build important relationships at all levels of law enforcement that result in better coordination between agencies. Oregon is recognized as a state where partnership and coordination among police agencies is very strong.

Scenario-Based Training and Curriculum: The Oregon basic police curriculum is regularly updated to ensure that best practices in policing are integrated into our basic training. As you heard during testimony from DPSST yesterday, a complete update of the curriculum is nearing completion. This update will make Oregon the first state in the nation with a fully evidence-based curriculum. Oregon also was a pioneer in scenario-based training where officers must apply their training in realistic and pressurized scenario's. This allows training mentors to coach cadets and better prepare them for the actual work they will be doing when they go back to their hiring agency. We know that some of you have had the opportunity to take a tour and participate as an actor in the scenario village. For those of you who haven't, we would like to invite you to do so once we get through this COVID pandemic.

Center for Policing Excellence: CPE was created in 2013 with the passage of House Bill 3194 - Criminal Justice Reform and Reinvestment Act. The Act tasked CPE with training updated skills in policing based on scientific research, as well as promoting partnerships between researchers and criminal justice practitioners. The scope of CPE has grown to include developing and maintaining up-to-date curriculum for public safety academies and building statewide resources for local behavioral health and crisis response programs. One of the innovative programs the Center for Policing Excellence created is the Oregon Knowledge Bank, a one-stop location for innovative, evidence-based practices and problem-solving programs that is a resource for and created by the public safety community in Oregon.

Important Funding Priorities for DPSST:

Protect DPSST from Budget Reductions: Because DPSST is a lean agency with responsibilities that are critical to the public safety system, budget cuts result in significant impacts. Before funding new programs in the public safety program area, we hope you will prioritize protecting DPSST from reductions. We know you are likely to consider numerous bills with fiscal impacts during the 2023 Session. Please ensure that DPSST is fully funded to accomplish its mission.

Full funding of Basic Police and Corrections Classes: We are hopeful that you will fully fund the 20 basic police classes requested by DPSST. We were pleased to see that the Governor's recommended budget includes the 20 basic training classes that represents the maximum number of basic training classes the academy can accommodate. Currently, there is a severe backlog of new officer hires waiting to begin their basic training. Any backlog at the local level results in reduced staffing levels for law enforcement patrols and correctional facilities.

Fund 15 Additional Training Staff Positions Necessary to Deliver Basic and Regional Training: Several of the 15 recommendations from the 2021 audit conducted by the Oregon Secretary of State address the agency's lack of adequate instructor resources. As you heard during the agency presentation on their budget, DPSST's instructor pool utilizes agency loans and part-time instructors in addition to regular full-time instructors. Agency loans are more and more difficult to secure as employing agencies are experiencing severe staff and applicant shortages. While not included in the Governor's recommended budget, these additional training positions are critically important to DPSST's ability to deliver basic training courses and regional training.

- Hire additional generalized instructors who are available to teach core topics across all basic courses. DPSST's instructor cadre serves all other disciplines as well. Those others are Basic Corrections Local, Basic Parole and Probation, Telecommunications, Emergency Medical Dispatch and Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission.
- Provide funding for utilization of part-time instructors and role players.
- Work to expand regional training opportunities for certified officers who require on going advanced and maintenance training for their respective certifications.

Approve Funding for a Learning Management System (LMS). Also identified by the 2021 Oregon Secretary of State Audit, DPSST lacks adequate technology resources that are essential to their mission. An LMS would:

- Modernize tracking of student progress and management of course curriculum.
- Facilitate online learning.
- Modernize application for certification and licensure processes.
- Replace programs that are outdated or piecemealed.
- The Learning Management System would benefit all DPSST programs. (Criminal Justice, Fire, Private Security, and Private Investigators)

Appropriate Additional funding for Regional Training: As you know, Oregon is one of the least policed states with just 1.48 officers per 1000 population. Oregon also has over 60 agencies in the state with 10 or fewer sworn officers where the police chief often responds to calls for service and serves as back up to their officers. These agencies depend on regional training that can be delivered within a reasonable distance because they are unable to free up officers to travel to Salem for training. With the unique challenges facing public safety along with the priority of continued implementation of the police reform measures passed between 2020 and 2022, robust regional training is needed (now more than ever) for our state’s public safety professionals. In particular, additional resources for use of force, de-escalation, procedural justice, officer wellness and behavioral health that can be delivered throughout the state is critically important.

Thank you for your consideration!