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To: **Members of the Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee**

From: Curtis Landers, Lincoln County Sheriff/OSSA President
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police

Date: March 8, 2023

Re: **Testimony in Support of SB 5512**
Additional Funding for Critical Programs-Oregon Judicial Department

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

My name is Curtis Landers, and I am the Lincoln County Sheriff and current president of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association. I am also a member for the SB 48 Chief Justice Criminal Advisory Committee (CJAC) pretrial subcommittee.

On behalf of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association (OSSA) and the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police (OACP) we submit this testimony in support of the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) budget request to support statewide pretrial release programs statewide.

Approving this budget will provide for additional Release Assistance Officers (RAOs) to support expanding pretrial release programs across the state as a result of implementation of SB 48.

RAOs provide a vital role in serving our pretrial in-custody defendants. RAOs interview pretrial in-custody defendants, conduct risk assessments, follow up on individual defendant circumstances, including contacting crime victims. They will make well informed recommendations to a judge on whether a defendant should be released pending case resolution. RAOs can divert people with serious mental illness and substance use disorders out of the criminal justice system and into treatment as early as possible.

In Lincoln County, we have had a pretrial justice program since 2018. Prior to 2018, we forced release a very high number of individuals prior to serving their sentence or adjudicating their case. These individuals were not properly assessed for risk to the community or if they would show up for their court date. This contributed to a high fail to appear rate and defendants often reoffended. Following implementation of our

program, our force release numbers significantly reduced, and everyone released from custody has a plan (which could include a monitoring component) due to our RAOs.

Additional RAOs are needed to provide adequate staffing across the state to ensure every County is effectively utilizing jail beds and making informed decisions on who should stay in jail and who should get out.

One of SB 48 goals was to provide a consistent statewide pretrial program for every county. Approving this budget will provide for an Oregon specific risk assessment tool for fair and equitable release decision making. Currently, several risk assessment tools are being used depending on the County. Risk assessment tools are essential to determining who will be successful (showing up for their court appearance and not reoffending) and who should stay in jail to ensure a safe community.

If approved, this funding will also provide a statewide pretrial case management system. Currently, it is very difficult and time consuming to monitor defendants across county lines which ultimately decreases public safety and reduces a defendant's success in the program. Providing a statewide case management system will assist RAOs and other pretrial personnel across the state with monitoring and more effectively managing their pretrial caseload.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.