



**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**

**Sheriff Curtis L. Landers**

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**DATE:** April 14, 2023

**TO:** Joint Committee on Ways and Means

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Landers".

**FROM:** Curtis L. Landers, Sheriff

**RE: SUPPORT ON SB 5512 – Pretrial Release**

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**Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, and members of the committee**

My name is Curtis Landers, I am the Lincoln County Sheriff and current president of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association, and am here to urge your support for Policy Option Package 101 in SB 5512, the budget bill for the Oregon Judicial Department on behalf of the Sheriff's Association and the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police. I am also a member of the Chief Justice's Criminal Advisory Committee (CJAC) pretrial subcommittee.

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

Approving this budget will provide for additional Release Assistance Officers (RAOs) in 11 counties to support expanding pretrial release programs across the state as a result of implementation of 2021 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 share this information and may make recommendations that enable a judge to make better informed decisions on whether a defendant should be released and if so on what conditions pending case resolution. RAOs can help divert people with serious mental

illness and substance use disorders out of the criminal justice system and into treatment as early as possible.

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. Risk assessment tools are essential to determining who is most likely to 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, and also give the legislature and the public safety community data so we can measure the effectiveness of the program and where improvements might be needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions.