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OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
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PO Box 7468 Salem OR 97303

To: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

From: Sheriff Mark Garton, President
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Date: January 30th, 2025

Re: **HB 2901 - Testimony in Support**
Enhancing Oregon's Safe Haven Law – Newborn Safety Devices

Chair Hartman and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Mark Garton, I am the Polk County Sheriff, and I currently serve as the President of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association. I am here today on behalf of the Sheriff's Association and the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police to speak in favor of HB 2901.

HB 2901 updates Oregon's Safe Haven law by expanding options for parents in crisis to safely surrender their infants, ultimately preventing abandonment and tragic outcomes. Law enforcement strongly supports this measure for several key reasons:

1. Protecting Vulnerable Infants

The primary purpose of HB 2901 is to protect the most vulnerable members of our community: newborns. By allowing parents to surrender an infant up to 60 days of age, either directly to a staff member or through a securely designed newborn safety device, this legislation provides a life-saving alternative to unsafe abandonment. These safe surrender options ensure that no infant is left in harm's way and that their health and safety are prioritized.

2. Providing Options for Parents in Crisis

Parents facing overwhelming circumstances often act out of desperation. The inclusion of newborn safety devices gives them an additional, anonymous option to surrender their child safely without fear of judgment or reprisal. These devices are secure, equipped with dual alarm systems, and located in areas where staff can respond immediately. This ensures infants receive the care they need without delay.

3. Supporting Authorized Facilities

HB 2901 establishes clear guidelines for authorized facilities that choose to install newborn safety devices. By requiring 24/7 staffing by medical professionals, regular testing

and maintenance of the dual alarm system, and ongoing visual inspections, the bill ensures that these devices function as intended. Law enforcement appreciates the proactive measures outlined in the bill to guarantee the safety and reliability of these devices.

4. Strengthening Community Safety

As law enforcement professionals, we understand the importance of preventive measures to avoid potential tragedies. HB 2901 not only protects infants but also supports families and communities by providing a humane and compassionate option for those in crisis. By reducing the risk of abandonment, this bill upholds the values of safety and care that all Oregonians deserve.

We urge you to pass HB 2901, and we thank you for your leadership in considering this important measure.