



Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Wallan and Chotzen, and Members of the Committee,

This coalition of emergency responders writes to register **opposition to Section 2 of HB 2640**, which will heighten the standard and make it significantly more difficult to prove Aggravated Harassment when someone spits on a public safety officer, by requiring that the saliva creates a risk of spreading communicable disease. Of note, the definition of public safety officer used is broad and includes emergency medical services providers and fire service professionals:

Section 2(3)(a): “Public safety officer” means an emergency medical services provider as defined in ORS 682.025, a regulatory specialist as defined in ORS 471.001 or a fire service professional, a parole and probation officer or a police officer as those terms are defined in ORS 181A.355.

This change is unnecessary and creates additional burden to prove that the saliva in question creates the risk of carrying communicable disease, which is a process that will require multiple experts, testing facilities, and expense.

Public safety officers, including EMS and fire professionals, put themselves in harm’s way daily to protect and help the public. The act of intentionally attempting to cause additional harm to these dedicated public servants by spitting on them should be taken seriously, but Section 2 of HB 2640 weakens this area of the law. The existing statute already requires that the saliva must come into contact with the public safety officer in order to qualify as aggravated harassment. Further weakening this statute to require that the saliva also creates a risk of spreading communicable disease is an unnecessary threshold that will create additional cost and burden, and fails to recognize the severity of the crime.

Respectfully, this coalition of emergency responders urges the Committee remove Section 2 from HB 2640.

Thank you for your consideration,

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