



OREGON ASSOCIATION CHIEFS OF POLICE
EXCELLENCE IN POLICING

PO Box 21719 Keizer OR 97307



OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
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PO Box 7468 Salem OR 97303

To: House Judiciary Committee

From: Sheriff Matt English, Hood River County Sheriff's Office
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Chief Trevor Womack, Salem Police Department
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police

Date: March 25, 2025

Re: HB 3929 - Testimony in Support
Ensuring Confidentiality in Peer Support Interactions

Chair Kropf and members of the committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and Oregon State Sheriffs' Association in strong support of HB 3929.

HB 3929 is a critical piece of legislation that ensures public safety peer support communications remain privileged and confidential. This bill is necessary in response to a troubling decision by a Washington State Court that compelled disclosure of peer support conversations, an action that has sent a chilling effect through law enforcement and other public safety professions across the country. The unintended consequence of this decision is that public safety personnel may now hesitate or refuse to seek the peer support they desperately need, fearing that their words may not remain private.

Law enforcement officers and other public safety professionals operate in an environment of extreme stress, trauma, and exposure to critical incidents. The nature of our work requires us to confront life-threatening situations, witness human tragedy, and make split-second decisions under immense pressure. Because of these challenges, peer support programs have become an essential component of our wellness strategies, providing officers and other public safety personnel with a trusted avenue to process their experiences, seek guidance, and maintain their mental health.

Confidentiality in peer support conversations is paramount. Without the assurance that these discussions will remain private, our personnel will be far less likely to reach out for help, leading to negative consequences not only for their well-being but also for their families, colleagues, and the public they serve. The erosion of trust in peer support

programs puts officers at greater risk for burnout, post-traumatic stress, and diminished job performance, which in turn affects public safety outcomes.

As law enforcement leaders, we prioritize the wellness of our officers and staff because we recognize that their well-being directly impacts their ability to serve the community effectively. When officers receive the support they need, they are better equipped to handle stressful situations, engage positively with the public, and perform their duties with professionalism and sound judgment. Research and experience consistently demonstrate that agencies with robust wellness programs, including confidential peer support, see fewer use-of-force incidents, improved decision-making, and stronger community relationships.

HB 3929 aligns with efforts nationwide to reinforce the importance of peer support confidentiality. Several states have taken legislative action to protect these critical conversations, recognizing that doing so strengthens the overall health and effectiveness of public safety professionals. Oregon must follow suit to ensure our officers and first responders feel safe accessing the support they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.