



Testimony in Support: HCR 201
House Committee on Emergency Management and Veterans
Submitted by: Genoa Ingram
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The Oregon Fire District Directors Association (OFDDA), formed in 1950, serves the elected public officials of over 200 Fire Protection Districts throughout Oregon, all Special Districts formed under ORS Chapter 478. The five-member governing boards, who serve without compensation, are responsible for the financial and management oversight of the Districts.

HCR 201 outlines the rich history of the Oregon Fire District Directors from the tragic circumstances that triggered its formation to the path that led us where we are today. I want to honor the Past Presidents and Board members who have served throughout the years, as well as the many fire district directors throughout the State.

It is not easy to be a fire district director. The position requires much responsibility including financial accountability, adherence to ethics laws, public records, and public meeting laws, to name a few. Directors are stewards of taxpayer dollars and, as public officials, are personally responsible for an improper expenditure of public funds. This is broader than the term “misuse of funds” because it includes the spending of funds outside of appropriations.

Directors must also be knowledgeable and compliant with regard to public meeting laws and adhere to directives regarding the confidentiality of material and information received in executive session. Violations of the executive session topic requirements may also lead to ethics charges and personal liability.

The OFDDA sponsors the annual Fire Service Conference and provides valuable training in the regulatory areas mentioned above. And, if a smaller district cannot afford to attend these training conferences, the Association offers scholarships so that directors may attend at no charge, regardless of whether they are members of OFDDA or not.

OFDDA also administers the Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) as an incentive for attraction and retention of volunteer firefighters. While the shortage of volunteer firefighters may tempt districts and departments to find ways to compensate their volunteers, the IRS has stated that LOSAP is a “bullet proof” mechanism for offering deferred compensation. The program currently serves more than 50 districts and city fire departments across the state. In 2025, staff processed more than \$750,000 in contributions to volunteer firefighter accounts and processed three death benefits.

I am blessed to have been a part of the Oregon Fire District Directors Association since 2001 and count it a high point of my career. I want to thank my Board and my predecessor, Burton Weast, for his excellent research on the history of the Association.

Lastly, thank you to our sponsors, Representatives Boice, Scharf, and Wright for bringing the bill forward, and to the committee for hearing it today. We encourage passage of HCR 201.