



**To: Members of the House Rules Committee**

**From: Chief Jim Ferraris, Woodburn Police Department**  
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

**Date:** February 20, 2018

**Re: Support for HB 4161 – Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle (UUV) Legislation**

**Good afternoon Chair Williamson, Vice-Chair McLane and members of the committee,**

For the record, my name is Jim Ferraris and I currently serve as the Chief of Police for the City of Woodburn. I am here today on behalf of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and Oregon State Sheriffs' Association, in support of HB 4161 which modifies the culpable mental state for the crime of unauthorized use of a vehicle.

I have 40 years of experience as a police officer in Oregon and an in-depth understanding of the dynamics and impact of crime in the great state we live in. I have served in the communities of Beaverton as a police officer and detective, in Portland for nearly 30 years holding every position from officer to Assistant Chief of Police, in Salem as the Deputy Police Chief and now Woodburn as the Chief of Police.

Two Oregon Court of Appeals cases handed down in 2014 and 2015 have all but crippled vehicle theft prosecutions in Oregon. The cases require that the state prove the defendant had "knowingly" taken possession of a stolen vehicle. Absent clear admission or a confession by the suspect, it is nearly impossible to successfully prosecute a person for unauthorized use of a vehicle. These court decisions have had a direct bearing on the increase of vehicle theft and property crime across Oregon.

For example, over the past few years, Woodburn's vehicle theft rate has skyrocketed. For a community of about 25,000 residents, we have seen vehicle theft increase 145% over the last five years, from 60 stolen cars in 2013 to 147 stolen cars in 2017. In Portland, the incidents of

vehicle theft have steadily risen, increasing nearly 50% in 3 years, with numbers well into the thousands. The City of Salem has also experienced drastic vehicle theft increases over the past few years.

Meth and opioid addiction fuel vehicle theft, and property crime. We continue to encounter people under the influence of heroin, prescription opioids, methamphetamine and other drugs on a daily basis. Law enforcement officers across the state continue to seize record numbers of these illegal drugs. In addition to drug treatment, prevention and education, a key component to breaking the cycle of addiction-fueled property crime is to hold property criminals accountable. Court decisions such as what I've referenced prevent us from breaking that criminal cycle.

Passage of HB 4161 helps law enforcement, prosecutors and the Courts hold vehicle theft offenders accountable to the benefit of Oregonians. This bill will help reduce the property crime rate in Oregon only if the Legislature ensures that the Oregon Department of Corrections has sufficient resources to deal with these vehicle theft offenders entering the corrections system. HB 4161 is good for Oregon and protects our communities.

Thank you for your consideration