



Executive Director's Message

Winter 2018

Recently Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has come to the forefront of law enforcement. We at the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association (OSSA) realize all too well that law enforcement and first responders are heroes for countless Oregonians, responding quickly to traumatic crises and ensuring their communities are safe. OSSA commends law enforcement and first responders for their selfless duty and recognizes the mental health impact that regular, prolonged exposure to stressful and traumatic events can have on individuals. However, the introduction of new PTSD presumption legislation introduces a formulaic approach to mental health that doesn't serve the needs of those suffering from PTSD or Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI).

OSSA, and other law enforcement and community stakeholders are actively engaged on this issue, working to develop solutions that address officer wellness through a Statewide Officer Wellness Task Force. Physical, emotional and mental wellness for our sheriffs and their deputies is a priority, and Oregon sheriff's offices continue to institute and encourage officer wellness practices that are supported by mental health professionals. We recognize that effective mental health wellness strategies and treatment cannot be implemented by policy that encourages a one-size-fits-all approach.

OSSA and other opponents to this legislation encourage policymakers and the public to look for innovative solutions that would implement proven wellness practices and actively serve Oregon's heroes who are suffering from PTSD or PTSI. While there is no single solution to improving officer wellness and access to mental health care, the PTSD presumption legislation calls for the implementation of bureaucratic processes that are ineffective and put a strain on public safety and response resources. In a time when Oregon needs an innovative, fluid and effective approach to mental health, we urge lawmakers to look beyond PTSD presumption legislation.

There are many more projects that OSSA is working on and will continue to do so throughout the year. If any of these issues are important to you, and you haven't already, please join OSSA and/or ask a friend to join. For \$30.00 a year you can help your Sheriff fight for public safety.

While the above PTSD issue is extremely important to the sheriffs, there are so many other issues: funding for search and rescue, marine, and forest patrols, staff shortages, dwindling resources and in general a more aggressive action toward law enforcement are also important. These issues will be addressed in the upcoming year of 2019. We have had another exciting and busy year, and we will keep doing our best to keep you informed and our communities safe. Thank you, members, for your support. If you're not a member and would like to be or know someone who isn't, please have them go to our website, www.oregonsheriffs.org and join us. Your help is what keeps us going in the ongoing issues of public safety. ★

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Bishop'.

Sheriff John Bishop (Retired)
OSSA Executive Director