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Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Conservators of the Peace

MEDIA RELEASE

Response to Questions Regarding the Oregon Office of Sheriff

Sheriffs in all 36 Oregon counties have taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of Oregon, and the laws thereof. Our oath is our pledge to you, to be conservators of the peace for our citizens, while being respectful of the rights afforded to all of us under the Constitution.

What a great state and nation we live in that allows everyone to express their opinion, hold a sign in protest, lobby for change and live free without fear of retaliation from the government. Our founding fathers created a system of government consisting of three branches: legislative, judicial and executive.

Sheriffs and Sheriff's Offices are part of the executive branch, charged with enforcement of laws as directed by the legislative branch and interpreted by the judicial branch. Under our system of government, the judicial branch is given the authority to interpret the Constitutionality of our laws. We are a nation of laws, and the executive branch cannot override the laws passed by the legislative branch, nor can we ignore the clear guidance of the judicial branch. There is a process for changing the laws of our great nation and for amending our Constitution, and that process does not involve the armed takeover of government facilities and disruption of an entire community. We fully support the expression of political opinions, and advocating for change within the legal system – that is what sets our country apart from developing countries where the government is changed by an armed takeover.

Recently, men and women have broken the law and encouraged others to take up arms against our local and federal governments. These individuals have used firearms and their interpretation of the Constitution to justify their criminal behavior. These militia men and women have broken into publicly owned buildings, disrespected Native American heritage and intimidated and harassed local residents and officials.

These men and women are asking for change, and we support their right to challenge our government to make change. However, we do not agree with or support any citizen or elected official who would advocate for change in a manner that includes illegal action, threats of violence, or violence against any citizen of the United States.