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PRESS RELEASE

RE: Response to Drug Reduction Proposal by Oregon Sheriffs and Police Chiefs

The Clackamas County District Attorney's office received no advance notice of the proposal by the Oregon State Sheriff's Association and the Oregon Association of Police Chiefs to reduce crimes involving drug possession including heroin, methamphetamine and cocaine to misdemeanors. There were no advance discussions about this concept, neither its purpose nor the possible consequences of such a policy.

Oregon's District Attorneys are the offices that file and prosecute such cases in court. It is our offices that negotiate the resolution of these cases, including drug courts, drug treatment programs, diversion programs, etc. There are many possible repercussions from a reduction of crimes involving heroin, methamphetamine and cocaine that must be carefully considered, particularly in light of the fact that Oregon is currently experiencing an epidemic in heroin and methamphetamine use. As only one example, it is worth considering whether or not such a policy would make Oregon a haven for users of these drugs who would come from other parts of the country.

The purpose of this proposal has not been clearly explained. Therefore, we do not know if there are more effective ways to reach the goal without taking this step. Obviously, we believe it is important to first identify the goal of any policy proposal before deciding on the tactics to reach that goal. We are not sure that has happened here.

We look forward to learning more about this proposal and participating in a full and robust discussion of both the purpose and effects of such a concept.

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