



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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Oregon House Passes Bill Affirming Tribal Self-Governance of Tribal Police

SB 731 A sets in Oregon statute the right of tribal governments to set their own policies for tribal police on Native land

SALEM, OR – The Oregon House voted today to affirm the right of tribal governments to set policy regarding tribal police. Senate Bill 731 A clarifies tribal sovereignty over tribal police on reservation and when acting within the sovereign authority of a tribal nation, allowing the Oregon legislature to set police accountability laws without inadvertently establishing policies for Oregon’s tribal governments. In a session marked by several high-profile bills looking at police reform, SB 731 A affirms the right of tribal governments to set policy for tribal police.

“This legislature has done some important work this session to make changes to Oregon law enforcement, but those reforms cannot come at the expense of tribal sovereignty,” said Rep. Tawna Sanchez (D-North and Northeast Portland), who carried the bill on the House floor. “Tribal governments that wish to adopt these reforms are welcome to do so, but it is absolutely essential that they have that right to self-determination, and that they be allowed to make their own policies for tribal police.”

SB 731 A clarifies that tribal officers will follow all Oregon laws when not on reservation, and will follow the Oregon laws specifically pertaining to tribal officers at all times, but ensures that the tribes otherwise have authority over their own police officers on reservation and when exercising their treaty rights off-reservation. It maintains Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) requirements for tribal police officers outside of Indian country, including making sure tribal police officers follow regulations required of them for DPSST certification, requiring tribes to follow background check and fitness standards, and requiring Tribes to relay to DPSST reasons for tribal officer termination.

SB 371 A passed 50-8 and now heads to the Governor’s desk.

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