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February 15, 2024

To: Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum
1162 Court St NE
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From: Portland Copwatch

re: Law Enforcement Deadly Force Incidents in Oregon Down By 27% From 2022; 420+ total 2010-2023

Attorney General Rosenblum:

Portland Copwatch has been sending you information about officer involved deadly force incidents in Oregon (or involving Oregon law enforcement) every year since 2014. We now have data collected for 14 years: 2010-2023. Police set **a record in 2022 with 42** new incidents, but we **only counted 33 in 2023**-- a 27% decrease. **This is now the seventh year in a row where there have been over 30 incidents.** We've updated our database and this letter, bringing a total of at least 421 incidents in the 14 years. The average per year, which was 25 per year before 2017, is now nearly 30 per year. Since 2019, we have asked your office to pay attention to the uptick in officer shootings. The increase in Oregon's fatal deadly force incidents does not match the national trend of a consistent number of such incidents at about 1000 (per the *Washington Post*). As of February 15, there have already been at least four such incidents in Oregon in 2024.*-1 Side note: this year included two people who were killed at age 18.

We noticed that at least nine people listed on the state's database have their race listed as "other," and nearly all are known to be Latinx or have Latinx surnames. The drop-down menu for data entry does not have a Latinx option.

We began our analysis to ensure the AG's office was publishing the incidents in which a person died after Oregon law enforcement used deadly force, **as required by SB 111 (2007)**. The State DOJ created that list quietly in late 2016. At last check, only 74 of 118 deaths caused by law enforcement deadly force from 2018 to 2023 (63%) were listed on the DOJ website.*-2 While still better than the 30% figure we found in 2020, it is unacceptably low.

Eighteen people died at the hands of law enforcement in 2023. We also added two 2010 cases we hadn't previously included on the DOJ site, bringing **the total deaths of community members to 232 in 14 years** (over 16 per year average). Oregon's crime data show about 200 homicides a year in Oregon in 2021 and 2022.*-3 Assuming a comparable rate in 2023, with 18 killings this means one of every 11 homicides was committed by law enforcement. That is the same as last year and lower than our past estimates, but still alarming. We still contend that such rampant use of violence to enforce state power deserves your attention.

To summarize our updated findings:

___Totals:

---421 incidents involving 428 civilians*-4	<i>[was 386/391]</i>
---402 shootings, 215 ending in death (53%)	<i>[was 367/195 and 53%]</i>
---9 Taser-related deaths	<i>[no change]*-5</i>
---5 deaths in custody	<i>[no change]</i>
---4 vehicles as deadly force, 3 ending in death	<i>[no change]</i>

___Location of 420 incidents (excluding one in Washington state):

--The incidents occurred in 29 of Oregon's 36 counties [first Tillamook County shooting this year].
--The incidents happened in 120 municipalities/unincorporated areas in Oregon [5 new; last count was 115].
--The top 5 cities accounted for 162 incidents (39%); the top 5 counties accounted for 276 (63%).

___Agencies involved:

--100 Oregon agencies were involved including incidents involving multiple agencies.
--Most frequently involved were Portland Police (73), Oregon State Police (46), Clackamas County Sheriffs (27), Salem Police (24), Washington County Sheriffs (23), Hillsboro Police (19), Medford and Gresham Police (13 each), and Eugene Police (12). The top 5 primary agencies account for 172 incidents, or 41%.

[Note: includes 5 new incidents by Clackamas County+, 4 new incidents by Oregon State Police+, PPB and Salem Police+, 2 new incidents by Boardman^, Douglas County (plus one from 2010), Grants Pass+, Hillsboro, Lane County and Washington County Sheriffs+ (plus one from 2010), and one each by Albany, Josephine County, Linn County, Marion County, Medford Police, Multnomah County, Polk County, Roseburg and Tillamook County^.

+ =agency was involved in a secondary role, ^ = agency new to the list. One incident involved a Federal Marshal.]

___ Broken down by year:

--2023:
--- 33 incidents
----33 shootings, 18 ending in death
-----> 4 involving Portland Police
-----> 4 with no hits

--2022:
--- 42 incidents
--- 41 shootings, 23 ending in death
-----> 9 by Portland Police
-----> 5 with no hits
-----> 1 non-fatal stabbing

--2021:
--- 35 incidents
--- 35 shootings, 18 ending in death
-----> 8 by Portland Police
-----> 3 with no hits

--2020:
--- 35 incidents
--- 33 shootings, 17 ending in death*-5
-----> 2 by Portland Police, 1 each by
 Gresham Police and US Marshals in Portland
-----> 4 with no hits (maybe 5)
-----> 1 by Warm Springs Tribal Police,
 1 by US Marshals
--- 1 death in custody, 1 Taser-related death

--2019:
--- 35 incidents
--- 32 shootings, 17 ending in death
-----> 6 by Portland Police, one by
 Vancouver (WA) Police in Portland
-----> 9 with no hits
--- 1 death in custody, 1 deadly force using vehicle
 ending in death, 1 Taser-related death

--2018:
--- 37 incidents
---36 shootings, 19 ending in death
-----> 6 in Portland plus one death in custody
-----> 4 with no hits
---1 death in custody (in Portland)

--2017:
--- 26 incidents
---26 shootings, 12 ending in death
-----> 6 in Portland
-----> 4-6 with no hits (unclear)

--2016:
--- 25 incidents
---24 shootings, 15 ending in death
-----> 2 in Portland
-----> 1 with no hits
---1 deadly force using vehicle ending in death

--2015:
--- 26 incidents
---25 shootings, 16 ending in death
-----> 6 in Portland
-----> 3 with no hits
---1 deadly force using vehicle ending in death

--2014:
--- 25 incidents
---23 shootings, 16 ending in death
-----> 4 in Portland
---1 death in custody
---1 deadly force using vehicle

--2013:
--- 30 incidents
---28 shootings, 13 ending in death
-----> 2 in Portland
-----> 3 with no hits
---2 Taser-related deaths

--2012:
--- 30 incidents
---27 shootings, 12 ending in death
-----> 6 in Portland
-----> 1 by US Marshals
-----> 2 with no hits
---3 Taser-related deaths

2011:
---14 incidents
---13 shootings, 5 ending in death
-----> 4 in Portland plus one death in custody
-----> 2 with no hits
-----> 1 by off duty Protective Service officer
---1 death in custody (in Portland)

2010:
--- 28 incidents 2010
---26 shootings, 14 ending in death
-----> 6 in Portland
-----> 1 with no hits
---2 Taser-related deaths

Race: We do not have enough information to fully break down the list by race statewide.

--16 of the 73 Portland shootings/deaths were of African Americans, or 22% of victims in a city that is 6% Black.

--Overall, at least 27 of the 428 civilians were African Americans, still 6% in a state which is 2% Black. Three people shot in 2023 were added to this total (two in Portland, one in Albany). We added one person from 2019 who was shot in Roseburg based on the data on the DOJ website.

Gender: All but 19 of 427 civilians whose gender was reported were male (96% male, same as 2022).

Four of the cases where females were shot (or tasered) were in 2014; one female was shot in 2018; three were shot at in 2019, two were shot in 2020 (one was killed), and one was shot or shot at each in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Age: The victims whose ages are known ranged in age from 16 to 88.

--Most common ages were 29 (21); 30 (19); 31 and 34 (18); 25, 26 and 27 (16); 40 (14); 32 and 44 (13); 36(12); 20 and 49 (11); 23, 24, 33, and 37 (10); and 22, 38, 51 and 55 (9).

[Four people in 2023 were age 34; six were 25 or under; four were over 50.]

[12 people's ages are not known including three from 2020, two from 2021 and four from 2022.]

--Average age was 37, consistent with 2022.

Veterans/mental health: At least 11 of the victims were primarily identified as military veterans in some kind of psychological crisis. We are still unable to track exactly how many of the civilians were in crisis, although in 2023 at least PoniaX Calles in Portland and Justin Jordan in Salem were reported to have mental health issues.

The fact remains that the only indictment for an officer in any of these cases (that we know of) ended with the unfortunate suicide of Portland Officer Dane Reister in 2015. His prosecution for a 2011 shooting was never carried out as an appeal from the Multnomah District Attorney was pending at the time of his death. We continue to encourage the AG's office to look into the idea of special prosecutors for these incidents, since local DAs are unlikely to pursue charges in cases involving officers they need to convict criminal suspects in their daily court proceedings. We recognize, however, that the Oregon DOJ has investigated the death of Philip Moskios, Jr., in Klamath County in 2018. In 2021, the state helped investigate Isaac Matheney's shooting in Lake County and Robert Delgado's shooting in Portland. Though DOJ found no criminal wrongdoing in any of these cases, we continue to encourage outside looks at these most serious events.

The officers who have not yet been named (we believe) in 2023 are the officers involved in the shootings in Albany (1/2), Boardman (1/4 & 4/4), Douglas County (5/19), Damascus (7/12), Roseburg (7/21), and Grants Pass (12/15), as well as a Federal Protective Service Marshal in Portland (7/3). These eight cases are not consistent with the 2-3 cases lacking such information most years (though there were 12 in 2022). We again urge the AG to ensure such names are published as transparency is in the public interest.

We hope to hear back from you.

dan handelman
Portland Copwatch

footnotes:

*1- in Baker City (1/2), Gresham (1/9), Gold Beach (1/12) and Portland (1/14).

*2- OR DOJ data: <https://justice.oregon.gov/deathincident/home/search> .

Notably there is also one death that was reported as a suicide in 2019 (and two in 2015) listed on the DOJ site.

*3- Data from <https://www.oregon.gov/osp/Pages/Uniform-Crime-Reporting-Data.aspx>

*4- One civilian was shot at twice by police in 2018; in seven other cases, including Portland and Salem in 2022 and Clackamas County twice in 2023, two or more people were targets of the police.

*5- Allen Pitts died in custody in Salem after being struck by a Taser in 2019, it is not clear if this contributed to his death. If so there have been at least 13 such deaths since Tasers were introduced in Oregon in 2002.

Additional notes:

--The Portland Police used a carotid choke hold in late August 2018, but we're not including that incident on this list as otherwise every use of a Taser or other violence that could lead to death would also be included.

--A Clackamas County Sergeant negligently discharged his gun in Jan 2019, no one was hit.

--In 2021, a Washington County Deputy accidentally killed a pedestrian, Clackamas Deputies chased a shoplifting suspect, who crashed into another car, killing a person, and Portland Police investigated an incident where a person they boxed in took their own life as a death in custody even though they did not use deadly force on the man.

PCW's database can be found at: <https://www.portlandcopwatch.org/ORshootings2010-23.pdf> .

NOTES:

(A) Explanation of data other than shootings by Oregon law enforcement (or not in Oregon) resulting in injury or death:

---Shootings with no hits are included because the officer(s) intended to injure or kill the civilians, so the incidents should be tracked as deadly force anyway and investigated as attempted homicides.

---Incidents involving federal agencies within Oregon's borders should be of concern to the State.

---An incident near Lincoln City in 2014 where an officer using a patrol car struck a suspect who was on foot should be counted as deadly force; the suspect ended up in critical condition. The incident in Klamath Falls in 2015 saw the officer hit the suspect's car, causing his death. In 2016, a Redmond officer deliberately struck a suspect, who died three days later. In 2019, a St. Helens officer deliberately struck and killed a man with his patrol car.

---A 2013 incident in Wishram, Washington involved deadly force by a plainclothes officer from The Dalles.

--We have chosen to include the 2022 incident in which a Washington County Deputy stabbed a suspect.

(B) Breakdown of incident data: (New: Cascadia, Damascus, Idleld Park, and Rockaway Beach; +Glide-2010)

--**By location** (418 incidents in Oregon, some areas are the nearest municipality): 82 in Portland; 33 in Salem; 18 in Hillsboro; 15 in Eugene; 14 in Medford; 12 in Gresham; 11 in Grants Pass; 9 in Beaverton, and Springfield, 8 in Aloha and Bend; 6 in Albany and Klamath Falls, 5 in Happy Valley, McMinnville, Oregon City and Roseburg; 4 in Cottage Grove, Eagle Point, Madras, Milwaukie, Pendleton, and Silverton; 3 in or near Boardman, Clackamas County, Fairview, Gladstone, Keizer, Lincoln City, Ontario, The Dalles, Tigard, Tualatin and Woodburn; 2 in or near Astoria, Boring, Brownsville, Canyonville, Cave Junction, Cedar Mill, Central Point, Coos Bay, Cornelius, Forest Grove, Lakeview, Lebanon, Molalla, Myrtle Creek, Oak Grove, Oakridge, Redmond, Reedsport, Scappoose, Seaside, Sherwood, St. Helens, Troutdale, the Warm Springs Reservation and Wilsonville; and 1 each in Adams, Amity, Ashland, Athena, Aumsville, Aurora, Beatty, Bethany, Brookings, Burns, Cascadia, Colton, Corvallis, Creswell, Dallas, Damascus, Elgin, Estacada, Florence, Gaston, Gates, Glide, Gold Beach, Gold Hill, Grand Ronde, Hermiston, Hubbard, Idleld Park, Lafayette, La Grande, Lake Selmac, La Pine, Modoc Point, Mt. Angel, Newport, North Albany, North Bend, Philomath, Prineville, Rockaway Beach, Sandy, Selma, Sisters, South Beach, Sunset Beach, Talent, Terminal City, Turner, Tygh Valley, Umapine, Valley Falls, Veneta, Warren, Welches, West Linn, White City, Wimer, Winchester Bay, Wolf Creek, Yachats and Yamhill County.

--**By county:** 99 in Multnomah; 50 in Washington; 47 in Marion; 36 in Clackamas; 35 in Lane; 26 in Jackson; 16 in Josephine; 13 in Douglas; 12 in Deschutes; 9 in Klamath; 8 in Benton, Umatilla and Yamhill; 7 in Linn; 6 in Jefferson, and Lincoln; 5 in Columbia and Clatsop; 4 in Wasco; 3 in Coos, Lake, Malheur and Morrow; 2 in Curry, Polk and Union; and 1 each in Crook, Harney, and Tillamook. [The seven counties without shootings from 2010-2023 are Baker, Gillam, Grant, Hood River, Sherman, Wallowa and Wheeler; all among the 14 least populous counties. Tillamook County joined the ranks in 2023.]

--**By agency** (second number after /slash/ indicates agency was one of multiple responsible in additional incident[s]): Portland Police (73-including 3 or more SERT); Oregon State Police (33-including 1 SWAT/13); Clackamas County Sheriff (25-including 4 SWAT/2); Salem Police (23 including 1 SWAT/1); Hillsboro Police (17/2); Washington County Sheriff (16-including 2 SWAT or TNT/7); Medford Police (13); Eugene Police (12-including 1 SWAT); Gresham Police (10/3); Lane County Sheriff (11); Marion County Sheriff (9/1); Beaverton Police (8/1); Douglas County Sheriff (8/2); Jackson County Sheriff (7/2); Springfield Police (7); Klamath Falls Police (6); Deschutes County Sheriff (5); Grants Pass Department of Public Safety (5/2); Linn County Sheriff (5); Multnomah County Sheriff (5/1); Bend Police (4); Fairview Police (4); Josephine County Sheriff (4/1); Polk County Sheriff (4); Albany Police (3); Eagle Point Police (3); Keizer Police (3); Klamath County Sheriff (3/1); McMinnville Police (3); Milwaukie Police (3); The Dalles Police (3); Tigard Police (3); Tualatin Police (3/1); Yamhill County Sheriff (3); Benton County Sheriff (2), Boardman Police (2); Dallas Police (2); Gladstone Police (2); Jefferson County Sheriff (2); Oregon City Police (2); Pendleton Police (2); Reedsport Police (2); Roseburg Police (2), Seaside Police (2); Silverton Police (2/1); St. Helens Police (2); Umatilla Tribal Police (2); and 1 each by Astoria Police, Athena Police, Aumsville Police, Brookings Police, Central Point Police, Coos County Sheriff (1/1), Cornelius Police, Corvallis Police; Cottage Grove Police, Crook County Sheriff, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, Elgin Police, Forest Grove Police (1/2), Gold Beach Police, Hermiston Police, LaGrande Police, Lake County Sheriff's Office (1/1), Lebanon Police, Lincoln City Police, Lincoln County Sheriff, Madras Police (1/1), Malheur County Sheriff, Molalla Police, Morrow County Sheriff, Mt. Angel Police, Myrtle Creek Police, Newberg-Dundee Police, Newport Police, North Bend Police, Oakridge Police, Ontario Snake River Corrections Officers, Portland State University Police (1/1), Redmond Police, Sandy Police, Tillamook County Sheriff, Umatilla County Sheriff, Warm Springs Tribal Police, Warrenton Police, Wasco County Sheriff, West Linn Police, Woodburn Police, Yamhill Police, a "multijurisdictional SWAT team" in Gladstone, and Vancouver (WA) Police; also shootings involving US Marshals (5/1), two Federal Protective Service officers, plus one which involved the Department of Justice, one with the FBI, one with the DEA and two with Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms as additional agencies. Listed as secondary agencies are also Clatsop County Sheriff's Office, Columbia County Sheriffs (2), Confederated Tribal Police, Coos Bay Police (2), Coquille Police, Florence Police, Milton-Freewater Police, PSU Campus Safety, and Sherwood Police.

[**Note: Boardman Police and Tillamook County Sheriff are new, all other agencies had previous incidents.**]