

1/13/2016

*Sgt Catherine M. Gorton
Multnomah County Corrections Deputy Association
1120 SW 3rd,
Portland, Oregon
97204*

Charter Review Committee

*501 SE Hawthorne Blvd.
Portland, Oregon
97214*

Members of the Committee,

Professional Public Management = Civil liability due to lack of knowledge in governing laws surrounding legal rights for jail administrators as well as inmates incarcerated. Historically, an elected Sheriff is a well-seasoned professional with years of experience and expertise in the daily management of civil liability and public safety which can cost millions in potential law suits. Commissioner Shipracks' memo to this subcommittee is an example of misleading information regarding the Sheriff. For example: She states: Sheriff patrols are limited and decreasing, when it's actually growing with the incorporation of Troutdale and soon to be Fairview. Not only does MCSO partner with Gresham, Portland, and Troutdale providing patrol to the main population of Multnomah County; we're the only agency providing services to outlying areas like Corbett who don't have a local police dept.

Additionally misleading is "most deputies serve as Corrections deputies". In a majority of largely populated counties (i.e. Washington, Clackamas, Pierce, and King to name a few) most members in fact **are** Corrections deputies who manage a large population of inmates. Together with the Command staff, we are experts in care and custody. We keep the County liability free and citizens safe.

Commissioner Shiprack states, “The level of sophistication and complexity in our modern corrections system requires flexible and innovative solutions and must see the “larger picture”. What she apparently doesn’t know is Multnomah County is the most innovative county in the state. Our Sheriffs’ are still the leaders locally, State wide and Nationally. Instrumental in creating the most modern booking practices in the country, leaders in the development and implementation of PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act), Suicide Prevention training, treating and stabilizing the mental health population while incarcerated and preparation for release, and currently leading the state in developing policies and management of Transgender inmates.

In Multnomah County, the Sheriff became appointed on January 1, 1967 through late 1978. The County board appointed six (6) different Sheriffs. During that time, voters were completely *dissatisfied* with that system, as a result they *overwhelmingly* returned to “Election” of the Sheriff. The position of Sheriff in King County, Washington, was elected until 1968. At that time, the Charter was amended, and the Sheriff became appointed, serving at the pleasure of the “elected” Commissioners. After several years of what turned out to be a **self-serving system**, the voters restored the citizen’s right to “Elect” their Sheriff. Popular reports indicate that the voters felt that public safety and law enforcement services suffered greatly and would be vastly improved by the return to election of the Sheriff.

Election is the best option.

There are at least four reasons to support election of the Sheriff:

- 1) The Sheriff provides a check and balance as an elected county official directly responsible to the *citizens* that he/she protects from undue influence by members of the county board or by other county officials. There are also several checks and balances of the Sheriff. The voters can remove the Sheriff from office during the election; the county board controls the budget

and salary of the Sheriff; and in extreme cases statutes authorize the removal of the Sheriff from office for misfeasance or nonfeasance of duty.

- 2) In our democracy, citizens should have the right to choose who is to be Sheriff. In many counties the Sheriff is the single most powerful individual and institution. Despite the efforts of appointment proponents, voters who have had a chance to decide the issue have nearly universally decided to keep the office elective. Citizens should have the freedom to choose their Sheriff and direct election is the best means to accomplish that.
- 3) The election of the Sheriff is consistent with national traditions and practices. Election of Sheriffs is nearly uniform throughout the United States. **History has shown in those jurisdictions in which the Sheriff is appointed there is a decrease in quality and continuity of law enforcement services and administration.** When the Sheriff is subject to the whims and caprices of the board of Commissioners, the office becomes **more** politicized, not less.
- 4) There is stability and continuity of office. Sheriffs at the county level and city police departments at the municipal level handle local law enforcement. While city police departments on the whole do a good job, comparison of the continuity, innovation and public responsiveness of the office Sheriff to city police demonstrates the perils of "appointment".

Respectfully Submitted,



Sgt. Catherine M. Gorton

President

Multnomah County Corrections Deputy Association