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PRESS RELEASE

Analysis on Oregon's Decline in Crime

Oregon exceeds the national average in its decrease in violent crime, according to data released today by the FBI. Oregon's violent crime rate dropped 10.6% from 2007 to 2008, the largest decrease of any state in the nation, and property crime also decreased by 6.9% statewide. Our violent crime rate has not been this low since 1970 and it was 1966 since we've seen property crime rates this low.

Oregon's continued and significant reduction in crime has followed smart public policy choices that have focused on prevention and treatment of addiction, while de-emphasizing expensive and ineffective incarceration strategies.

In 2005, at the height of the meth epidemic, Oregon could have taken a reactionary approach, but instead, we learned from best practices around the country regarding the most effective ways to address meth and addiction-driven crime. Oregon chose to reduce the availability of substances used to manufacture meth and invest meaningful financial resources into drug treatment and drug courts which have proven to reduce recidivism and future crime. The reduction in Oregon's crime rate is indicative that those strategies have been successful.

"Oregon policymakers need to be wary of people who want to peddle expensive tough on crime policies, like last year's mandatory minimum sentencing scheme (Measure 61)," says David Rogers, Executive Director of the Partnership for Safety and Justice.

"We've clearly seen that Oregon can reduce crime more effectively and less expensively when we invest in a treatment and prevention approach that emphasizes strategies like drug courts, rather than sinking hundreds of millions of dollars into building new prisons."

"We're deeply concerned about whether or not Oregon can continue to see this level of public safety progress. In order to do so, we need to strengthen funding for community-based addiction treatment and the legislature needs to stay focused on being smart on crime."

Partnership for Safety and Justice (PSJ) is a statewide, non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to making Oregon's criminal justice system more just and better equipped to strengthen public safety.