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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DISTRICT ATTORNEY, TIGARD POLICE, BUSINESS COMMUNITY JOIN TOGETHER TO ADDRESS COVID-19-RELATED CRIME CONCERNS**

HILLSBORO, Ore.- The Washington County District Attorney's Office is taking action to address a concerning trend in property crime committed in relation to the COVID-19 state of emergency.

This office is committed to ensuring that people and businesses are protected from all forms of crime, including theft. This is especially true as we respond to challenges related to COVID-19. Those who take advantage of our community's residents and businesses during a state of emergency will be held fully accountable for their actions.

Generally, whether a theft is a misdemeanor or a felony depends on the value of the property stolen. However, Oregon law (ORS 164.055) allows for certain misdemeanor thefts that occur during a state of emergency to be charged at the felony level, regardless of the property value.

Given our current state of emergency and concerns regarding property crime, the Washington County DA's Office will charge certain misdemeanor thefts at the felony level as allowed by Oregon law.

Examples of cases where felony charges may occur include but are not limited to the following:

1. The theft directly relates to the COVID-19 emergency (such as theft of face masks or PPE);
2. The defendant's actions demonstrate that he/she is taking advantage of the COVID-19 emergency in order to commit the theft (such as a theft of a closed business or otherwise taking advantage of the emergency for personal gain); or,
3. The was committed by a person who has committed multiple property crimes during the pandemic and otherwise meets the \$100 threshold for Theft in the Second Degree.

This office is working closely with our partners in law enforcement to monitor the situation on the ground and to respond appropriately. The Tigard Police Department's Commercial Crime Unit is increasing patrols and outreach to businesses to respond to increases in crime.

"Burglaries in our community, particularly those targeting commercial businesses, were up 60% in April compared to April of 2019. We are also seeing a marked increase in the number of stolen vehicle reports throughout Tigard," said Tigard Police Chief Kathy McAlpine.

A popular Tigard auto parts store has been burglarized four times since April. Additionally, the Organized Retail Crime Association of Oregon has seen its member businesses impacted by this crisis. Both groups are willing to share their experience with interested media outlets. You can find contact information

below.

While law enforcement continues to protect our community during this time, we all have a role to play. This office encourages community members to support one another by reporting crimes so that law enforcement can investigate them and so this office can prosecute offenders.

**Contact information:**

To arrange interviews with District Attorney Kevin Barton, the Organized Retail Crime Association of Oregon or an impacted business, contact Stephen Mayer at 971-708-8219 or via email at [stephen\\_mayer@co.washington.or.us](mailto:stephen_mayer@co.washington.or.us).

To request an interview with Tigard Police, contact Kelsey Anderson at 971-708-2921 or via email at [kelsey.anderson@tigard-or.gov](mailto:kelsey.anderson@tigard-or.gov).