



CENTER FOR INTERCULTURAL ORGANIZING

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To: Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Senate Bill 463

End Racial Disparities in Criminal Justice & Child Welfare: Pass SB 463

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee,

The Center for Intercultural Organizing (CIO) writes in support of Senate Bill 463, the bill to allow a member of the Legislature to request a racial & ethnic impact statement for legislation impacting the criminal justice system or human services.

Studies have shown persuasively that people of color are dramatically over-represented in Oregon's criminal justice and child welfare systems compared to the general population. In addition to violating basic notions of fairness and equality, these racial & ethnic disparities suggest that we are using state resources inefficiently and ineffectively. When it comes to our child welfare system in particular, the over-representation of children of color can have long-lasting negative consequences on families and communities.

CIO is a statewide organization working to build a multiracial, multiethnic movement for immigrant & refugee rights. Our work over the last decade has highlighted the profoundly negative effects that these disparities have on communities of color, and immigrant & refugee communities particularly.

Racial & ethnic impact statements are an excellent tool for gaining insight into how legislation might affect these disparities, much in the same way that fiscal & revenue impact statements allow legislators to better understand the financial cost of a bill. The experiences of both Iowa & Minnesota have underscored the usefulness of such impact statements in evaluating policy and creating more just systems.

Racial and ethnic impact statements are the first step to better understanding the problem, and identifying solutions. We urge your support of Senate Bill 463.

Respectfully,

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