

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT HB 3025**  
**Submitted to the House Committee on Business and Labor**  
**By Andy Ko, Executive Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice**  
**March 25, 2014**

To: The Honorable Chair Paul Holvey, Vice-Chairs Kennemer and Barton  
Members of the Committee on Committee on Business and Labor

Partnership of Safety and Justice (PSJ) is a statewide, non-profit organization that has worked to reform public safety and criminal justice policy in Oregon for more than 15 years. We advocate for public safety and criminal justice policies that address the needs of all people affected by crime and society's response to crime. We believe that effective policy should include an appropriate level of accountability from those who commit crimes, resources to ensure that crime survivors get the services they need, and a commitment to proven strategies that prevent crime and provide opportunities for both victims and people who commit crimes to rebuild their lives.

Partnership for Safety and Justice supports passage of HB 3024 to "Ban the Box."

Employment opportunity for people with past convictions is a public safety issue. Eliminating unnecessary barriers to employment is one of the simplest and most effective ways to ensure that people who have been held accountable for past offenses remain on the right side of the law. The income, health benefits and social stability associated with employment are, in many cases, essential elements in preventing future criminal activity. Employment also makes it more likely that people will pay restitution when there are victims.

Ensuring that people with past convictions have an opportunity to earn a living for themselves and their families is also a matter of justice. Where a job applicant honestly discloses a past conviction, the mere stigma associated with a criminal record raises a barrier to employment – even when the underlying crime has no bearing on future work performance or workplace safety. Also, given the disproportionate impact the criminal justice system on people of color, we view ending the practice of terminating applicants from consideration due solely to the disclosure of a past conviction as a matter of racial equity.

Partnership for Safety and Justice urges you to support this essential step to ensure that people held accountable for past crimes are able to successfully rejoin society, financially support their families, pay restitution, and rise above poverty and other situations that can result in unlawful activity. We ask that you support passage of HB 3025.