



CHANGE IS POSSIBLE. CHANGE IS HAPPENING.

March 30, 2015
Testimony in support of HB 2002

Dear Chair Barker and members of the committee,

My name is Andrea Paluso and I'm the Executive Director of Family Forward Oregon and the Co-Chair of the Fair Shot for All Coalition. We advocate on economic security issues that impact women and families in Oregon.

Profiling is the reliance by law enforcement on age, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, religion, homelessness or mental disability in deciding whom to investigate, arrest, or detain, where these characteristics are not part of a specific subject description.

Every member of our community has a fundamental right to be protected equally under the law and to be free from persecution based on how they look or with whom they are affiliated. We support creating a complaint and tracking process and true accountability by law enforcement that ends this kind of profiling in Oregon.

While men of color have historically been disproportionately affected by profiling, women are also seeing an increase in the practice. Nationally, women are the fastest growing prison population and, in particular, Black, Latina, and Muslim women are more likely to be subject to targeting by law enforcement, though there is no evidence that these women are more likely to commit a criminal offense. In fact, national research shows that across racial groups there is no significant variation in the likelihood of any one racial group to commit crime.¹ Thus, while women of color are not any more likely to be committing a crime than white women, they are more likely to be targeted by law enforcement.

Profiling based on race, sexual orientation and gender, or the intersections of all of these identities, continues to exacerbate the physical and mental threats to the well-being of women of color, mothers and queer and trans women in our communities. Instead of fearing intimidation, women should be able to rely on law enforcement for protection against harassment, domestic violence, and sexual assault.²

It is not just women of color in general, but mothers who also face being unduly targeted by law enforcement. The policing of mothers in poverty, in particular, involves the widespread targeting of mothers of color for investigation and includes threats to remove their children or to arrest them and separate them

¹ Basic Rights Oregon. Facing Race: 2011 Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity. Accessed at: <http://www.basicrights.org/wpcontent/uploads/2012/01/OR-Racial-Equity-Report.pdf>

² Ritchie, Andrea. Rights Working Group. Accessed at: <http://www.rightsworkinggroup.org/content/whats-gender-got-do-with-racial-profiling>



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from their children if they do not cooperate.³ This ever-increasing culture of criminalization of poverty, experienced most by women of color, mothers of color and queer and trans women, leads these already vulnerable communities without protection from law enforcement.

Oregon is one of eight states in the country that does not ban profiling. We must rebuild trust in the law enforcement system in our state by passing HB 2002 in order to prevent the disproportionate reliance on profiling by law enforcement. We support the passage of House Bill 2002.

³ Ibid.