



SEIU Testimony in Support of HB 2002 March 30, 2015

Chair Barker, members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Melissa Unger and I am the political director for SEIU Local 503. Along with Local 49, SEIU represents 65,000 members in Oregon. We support this bill as a part of the Fair Shot for All Coalition that is working to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to get ahead.

Our members live in every part of the state, they come from many different backgrounds and this bill is important to them. We believe that this bill is an important first step in the conversation regarding profiling. We believe that police officers work hard to keep our communities safe and work in jobs where they put their lives on the line on a regular basis. Having said that, we believe that we all have bias and that it impacts all of us in our jobs and that it is no different for police officers. By setting clear definitions, training, and data collection we can help identify areas where bias is impacting a community. That is what these amendments need to do.

We support where these amendments are headed. Creating a clear definition of profiling is important; we hope that the definition can be simple and clear. We do have concerns with including what profiling is not, that is not what most other states have done and we think it would be better to write a very tight definition of what profiling is. Second, we like that there is a third party data collector that will be able to look at trends and identify problems if there are trends and make sure that the appropriate person hears about complaints and protects the identity of the officer. Finally, the workgroup is very important so that we can make sure that if trends and problems of profiling do arise in a community there is a system in place to solve it.

Our members are diverse in age, in sexuality, gender, and race and we believe that this is important bill that acknowledges that there is work to be done to make sure that all communities feel equally protected by law enforcement. Oregonians need these steps to create communities where everyone feels that they have the same chance at getting ahead.

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