



CHANGE IS POSSIBLE. CHANGE IS HAPPENING.

March 6, 2017
Testimony in support of HB 2355: End Profiling
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2355, which will give Oregon the tools necessary to identify and address the problem of racial profiling by law enforcement. At Family Forward, we believe that 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 who they are affiliated with.

As part of the Fair Shot for All coalition, Family Forward worked to enact the ban on racial profiling in 2015. While this legislation was an important first step, there is still no structure or mechanism to effectively identify, record and correct profiling practices by law enforcement agencies in Oregon. Without this information, it is nearly impossible to pinpoint and address racial profiling problems, which is still a very real problem in Oregon.

Profiling is an issue that impacts families on many levels; 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 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 offence; 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. Many of these women fear intimidation and face targeting instead of being able to rely on law enforcement for protection against harassment, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

HB 2355 is the critical next step in addressing racial profiling in Oregon. We support the work of the Law Enforcement Profiling Task Force, which has worked for the past two years to make these thoughtful recommendations. We believe training, data collection, transparency, and accountability are critical and important components to actually addressing racial profiling in Oregon; the ban alone not sufficient if Oregonians and law enforcement don't have the tools to identify and correct profiling practices.

We also support the reduced charges proposed in HB 2355 which will help keep families together and avoid undue convictions and sentences for low level drug offenses. By reducing the charges for certain drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor and focusing on treatment and supervision, we can help break the cycle of incarceration and recidivism.

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>