



TO: Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

FR: Nancy Haque and Amy Herzfeld-Copple, Co-Executive Directors, Basic Rights Oregon

DA: March 6, 2017

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2355

Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, we respectfully request your support for HB 2355.

Basic Rights Oregon is the state's largest LGBTQ policy and advocacy organization, working for legal and lived equality for all LGBTQ Oregonians. A core part of our work is ensuring that LGBTQ people of color enjoy the same benefits and treatment as their white neighbors. We know firsthand, through stories we've heard from our community members, that profiling is an ever present reality among LGBTQ people of color.

Just two months ago, we were contacted by the partner of a man named Luis Garcia. Luis is an immigrant from Venezuela, and a gay man living with HIV. After living in the U.S. for 15 years, Luis was picked up by ICE after reporting his former partner for drug possession in Washington County. Were Luis a white woman from the same county, would this have happened? We have no doubt Luis was a victim of profiling. This is only one of many stories we've heard since the election. While a ban on profiling was passed in 2015, we believe Oregon can and should do better.

Passing HB 2355 will continue to work to change the culture of policing for LGBTQ people of color. It is crucial that we begin to collect data on all officer-initiated pedestrian and traffic stops, provide updated and regular training to all levels of law enforcement, and accountability measures and guidance for departments that need to correct patterns and practices of profiling.

HB 2355 also addresses the collateral consequences of profiling and disparities in convictions by reducing the charges for certain drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor. This will help communities break the cycle of incarceration and recidivism.

Basic Rights Oregon supports HB 2355, because LGBTQ people of color deserve to move throughout our state feeling safe and welcomed.

Thank you,

Nancy Haque & Amy Herzfeld-Copple
Co-Executive Directors

Every Community. Every County. Every Corner.

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