



March 6, 2017

Dear Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of the Western States Center, I respectfully request your support for HB 2355. The Oregon Work Group on the Prevention of Profiling by Law enforcement has met for the past two years and we are pleased with the conclusions that the stakeholders have reached in HB 2355.

We at Western States Center believe that it is pivotal to combat discrimination and profiling in any and all dimensions in order to deconstruct the proliferated acceptance and normalization of institutional and systemic oppression placed upon marginalized communities. Understanding that we as a community share a linked fate and are accountable to one another, it is our organization's position that we must build the capacity to acknowledge and interrupt discrimination, increase education on the roots and impacts of oppression, advocate for transformative justice where there are disparities, and progress collectively towards investing in the cultural work necessary to make sustainable and positive change by shifting narratives, practices, and policies that perpetuate racism, heterosexism, sexism, ableism, and white supremacy in all of its forms. Therefore, with amplified voices that urge us to consistently fight injustice and actualize equity, we at Western States Center endorse HB 2355 and will continuously support efforts that demand the practice of profiling ends.

Every day people are targeted based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, language, housing status, sexual orientation or gender identity. While the legislature passed a ban on police profiling in 2015, there is still no structure in place to effectively identify, record and correct any profiling practices by Oregon law enforcement agencies.

By passing HB 2355 Oregon will continue to work to change the culture of policing, make neighborhoods safer, and communities stronger. 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 a 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.

It is critical in these tumultuous times of glaring marginalization to hold institutions accountable for their actions, inactions, and biases. It is critical to uplift and make accessible data that can bring the harrowing analysis of discrimination's impacts to the fore. It is critical to acknowledge and emphasize that the common practice of profiling dehumanizes our communities. The impacts of profiling have affected how we perceive one another, how we educate future generations to value or devalue a human being because of their identities, and increases the degree of precarity as well as trauma for those who are most impacted by discriminatory processes and practices such as profiling. We must hold steadfast to our principles and values and mend the wounds that systemic injustice has produced. Oregon needs to take the next step to end profiling. The Western States Center supports HB 2355.

Thank you,

Western States Center