



March 6, 2017

To: Chair Barker and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

Fr: Matt Swanson, SEIU Oregon State Council

Re: Support House Bill 2355

Dear Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

In 2014, SEIU joined with our partners across the state to tackle the issue of profiling by law enforcement based on racial and other identities such as sexual orientation, language, housing status, gender identity and national origin. We believe that this issue is critical to address because a person's ability to have a fair shot to get ahead can be adversely impacted when profiled by law enforcement.

SEIU members live and work in communities throughout the state, come from diverse backgrounds and all share a common hope for just society. We believe that the law enforcement professionals in our state will be most successful when given the tools to work with all communities. This includes communities where they must confront biases that can impact how any of us would do our jobs. The recommendations of the task force to improve training standards will help our dedicated law enforcement professionals the tools to do their job to the best of their ability.

HB 2355 will also improve the analysis of trends that must be dealt with in our criminal justice system. By passing HB 2355 Oregon will continue to improve policing, make our neighborhoods safer, and communities stronger. This can be done by:

- collecting data on all officer-initiated pedestrian and traffic stops;
- providing up to date and regular training to all involved in law enforcement;
- and instituting accountability measures and support for departments that need to correct patterns and practices of profiling.

HB 2355 also addresses the collateral consequences of bias based on some disparities in convictions by reducing the charges for certain drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor. Based on data from the criminal justice commission, African American, Native American and other ethnic minority communities in Oregon are far more likely to be charged and convicted of drug possession crimes.

This will help communities break the cycle of incarceration and recidivism. As a union that represents many front-line workers who

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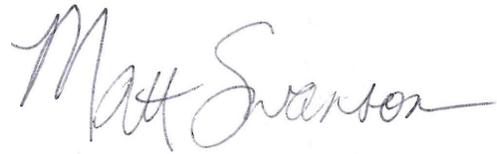
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deal with the impact of drug addiction, we are ready to engage in a conversation about how treatment can lead to better outcomes for those afflicted by the drug addiction epidemics in many communities.

Oregon needs to take the next step to end profiling. SEIU local 49 and 503 support House Bill 2355 and urge that the House Judiciary Committee will join us.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Swanson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Matt Swanson
Executive Director, SEIU Oregon State Council