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To: House Committee on Judiciary
From: Maria Gallegos
RE: HB 2355

Chair Barker, Vice-Chairs Olson and Williamson, and Members of the Committee,

Good afternoon, thank you so much for taking the time to have us here today. My name is Maria, I'm from District 30 and I am here today with the student association of the University of Oregon. I am here today to encourage a "Yes" vote on the End Profiling bill, HB 2355.

3 years ago, on New Year's Eve, my partner and his friend were pulled over. Now I'd like you to keep in mind his friend is a white army boy, and my partner is a 23-year-old Latino man with a larger build. His friend was driving and was caught for possession of marijuana however, he was let go with a warning and my partner was arrested that night. He was charged with a Grade B misdemeanor for possession of marijuana, but then he was encouraged to plead to a Grade A so he could avoid any hard time.

This Summer my partner was randomly checked at the Portland Airport and was ordered to appear for deportation trials, the monthly inspections, calls, and then in December he was detained for 2 months. During these 2 months, his family sacrificed so much like their cars and their house all so they could pay for his lawyer and sustain him while he was detained. As you can imagine, it severely impacted him and our relationship. He was innocent and yet he had to be put in chains and was treated worse than a rat. He is also a student at the University of Oregon and he had to withdraw from school and his research position at the UO since he was being detained. His health was also impacted; he was diagnosed with TB and is now suffering from depression and PTSD.

My heart had never hurt so much and I had never known how hopeless one can feel until I had to rely on the good graces of the US legal system. I have had a few family members incarcerated and deported but by far this was the hardest one on me. I cannot find the words to explain to you how it affected me besides the fact that I didn't sleep through those two months, i couldn't leave my house unless I had to, and I had severe anxiety and grief each day. He is a survivor of the war on drugs which is just a war on black and brown people. All because of one officer's bias my partner and his family had to endure this injustice and violence of the state. I urge you to vote "Yes" on HB 2355 so we can at least try to teach officers how to correct profiling practices and be held accountable to the violence they inflict onto marginalized communities.