



TO: Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety
FR: Nancy Haque and Amy Herzfeld-Copple, Co-Executive Directors, Basic Rights Oregon
DA: June 14, 2017
RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2355A

Co-Chair Winters, Co-Chair Stark, members of the committee,

On behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, we respectfully request your support for HB 2355A. 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 and transgender Oregonians 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 a significant issue for LGBTQ communities.

Several 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 Immigration and Customs Enforcement after reporting his former partner for drug possession and domestic violence 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.

Transgender women also report a high incidence of profiling. Law enforcement personnel, unfamiliar with gender identity, employ stereotypes of sex workers to target transgender women, particularly transgender women of color.

A ban on profiling was passed in 2015, however, much work remains. Passing HB 2355A will continue to work to change the culture of policing for LGBTQ communities. 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 2355A 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 2355A, 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