



My name is Kayse Jama. I am the Executive Director of Unite Oregon. We work to improve the lives of people in communities across the state. I am here today to strongly urge you to support House Bill 2355 AS IT IS CURRENTLY WRITTEN.

This bill before you today is part of a process that started two years ago with passage of HB 2002. For the past 18 months I have participated with the Law Enforcement Profiling Task Force alongside Attorney General Rosenblum, local community sheriffs, and law enforcement — all of whom agree that it is important to collectively move forward our work.

Although racial profiling may be the most visible form of profiling, it isn't the only type that occurs. In addition, I want to be clear that profiling is not an urban big city issue, it a statewide issue. For the past eighteen months, in partnership with our Attorney General and her office, we conducted four community listening sessions across the state: one in Portland, one in Washington County, one in Eugene, and one in Medford and hundreds of Oregonians attended those hearings, sharing their experience around profiling.

Unite Oregon has been working on this issue for more than a decade and we have heard countless stories of people being profiled based on their personal identities. We know that profiling is toxic to our communities—especially for people of color, immigrants and refugees, and LGBTQ people—who are incarcerated at higher rates. And it creates mistrust between the community and law enforcement, ultimately making our communities less safe.

House Bill 2355 addresses profiling through requiring statewide data collection and analysis to identify profiling in traffic stops and pedestrian searches, mandating anti-profiling training for all levels of law enforcement, and treating addiction like the public health issue it is by reducing small-scale possession of controlled substances from a felony to a misdemeanor.

In Oregon today, even minor possession of some drugs is automatically considered a felony, which carries the substantial risk of jail or prison time and lifelong impacts even after the sentence is served. By reducing minor possession offenses to misdemeanors, many Oregonians could avoid the devastating effects of being convicted on felony drug charges. In Oregon, as in every community in the United States, incarceration disproportionately impacts people of color, rural, and low-income communities.

The need to keep nonviolent offenders out of our prison system is crucial — for families, for law enforcement and for our communities. Please vote to pass House Bill 2355 out of committee AS IT IS WRITTEN. Thank you.