

Testimony in Support of SB 496 & SB 505

**Submitted to the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety,
By Andrew Ko, Executive Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice
June 27, 2017**

Chair Winters, Chair Stark and members of the committee,

Partnership of Safety and Justice (PSJ) urges your support for SB 496 and SB 505. PSJ is a nonprofit organization that has advocated for public safety and criminal justice policies in Oregon since 1999. We advance solutions to crime that ensure justice, equity, accountability, and healing. We do this by advocating for proven strategies that achieve safe and strong communities, prevent crime, and provide opportunities for both victims and people who commit crimes to rebuild their lives.

A justice system lacking transparency or accountability in due process doesn't serve crime survivors or those who have caused harm. We support SB 496 and SB 505 because we believe this legislation will protect the rights of victims, help create greater trust in our criminal justice system and provide needed transparency for all impacted by crime.

These bill creates safeguards to the confidentiality of crime victims by protecting information shared during deliberations and votes of grand juries. Records would also be exempt from public record laws. Both SB 496 and SB 505 propose that hearsay statements for minor victims should be allowed, which provide protections for children who might be retraumatized by having to come to court.

The creation of a verbatim record of grand jury hearings brings accountability and transparency to a process that bears profound impact on the lives of those accused, the lives of those harmed and the larger community.

Please support SB 496 and SB 505 to help bring Oregon into line with other states that recognize the importance of creating a record of one of the most critical moments in the criminal justice process.

Thank you for your consideration.