



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
SAFETY & JUSTICE**

**Testimony Regarding Police Accountability Measures
(LC 78, 79, 80, 81 & 83)**

**Testimony of Shannon Wight, Deputy Director at Partnership for Safety and Justice
Joint Interim Committee On The First Special Session of 2020
June 23, 2020**

Chairs Speaker Kotek & Senate President Courtney and Vice Chairs Leaders Girod and Drazan, Members of the Committee:

Partnership for Safety and Justice (PSJ) submits this testimony in regard to the police accountability bills being considered for the First Special Session of 2020.

PSJ is a statewide, non-profit organization that advocates for public safety and criminal justice policies. For nearly 20 years, our work has advanced state and local solutions that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both.

Our country and our state are in a moment where the systemic and structural racism inherent in our criminal justice system is being widely recognized and called to account. We support the movement for Black Lives Matter, thank the **POC Caucus** for moving so quickly to address police accountability and particularly thank **Senator Lew Frederick** for his continued advocacy on these issues over many years.

We support Unite Oregon and others who have come together to ask for more time to consider each of the bills and to take time to generate additional ideas that will shrink our policing and corrections system and reinvest in victims of crime and victims of police violence and healthy and strong communities.

LC 79, Requiring the Attorney General to investigate and appoint a special prosecutor to oversee use of force that results in serious injury or death is important legislation. It's worth noting that newly elected Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt made part of his election platform (before George Floyd was killed) a promise to create greater accountability for police misconduct because "sometimes law enforcement fails to follow the law or their own procedures." Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel recently told Think Out Loud he supported an independent unit at the Department of Justice to investigate officer involved shootings. This concept needs to be amended to include some technical fixes outlined by Unite Oregon and others but overall has PSJ's strong support.

LC 78, 80, 81, 83 are important pieces of legislation that would need further development to ensure they will achieve their intended outcomes and not have unintended consequences. While



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we believe it's important to act boldly, it's also imperative that the measures taken have the greatest impact.

In addition to granting more time for these bills, we support and signed on to a letter asking Governor Brown and the Legislature to:

- **Contribute State funding to a community-led reimagining of safety and resiliency. (Approx \$2.5M from various jurisdictions and the state)**
- **Provide enough time to review the police accountability bills proposed for the special session.**
- **Commitment to partnership after the special session.**

Further, PSJ is committed to identifying and meeting the needs of survivors of crime. As we reimagine our public safety systems, we believe it's imperative to include victims of police violence and those who have survived the homicide of a loved one at the hands of law enforcement.

We ask that you hear the request of PSJ and others in granting more time to engage the community in the development of comprehensive and transformative change to how we approach policing and public safety.