

June 23rd, 2020

Joint Interim Committee on the First Special Session of 2020
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Police Accountability LCs Written Testimony

Co Chair Courtney and Co Chair & Speaker Kotek, Co Vice Chairs Girod & Drazen, and members of the committee,

My name is Andrea Valderrama and I serve as Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC). The CCC supports a collective racial justice effort to improve outcomes for communities of color through policy analysis and advocacy, environmental justice, culturally-appropriate data and research, and leadership development in communities of color. We are an alliance of culturally-specific community based organizations with representation from immigrant and refugee, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latinx, Native American, and Slavic communities.

After hundreds of years of our Black, indigeous, and brown communities being taken and murdered at the hands of law enforcement agencies and institutionalized white supremacy, hundreds of cities and dozens of countries have been protesting in what is believed to be a historic & unprecedented global movement for #BlackLivesMatter. As a result of the incredible organizing and mobilizing, we have seen Oregon school boards divest from law enforcement & SROs, the City of Portland decrease the size of the police budget by \$27 million, and this legislature take up these critical issues during this special session. Thank you.

We are seeing a once in a lifetime opportunity to address systemic inequities. You have the opportunity to help realize the visions of community & public safety of BIPOC communities in the following 3 ways:

- 1. Establish a community-led effort to reimagine safety and resilience.** This should include grounding and resourcing the effort in Black-led and Black-serving organizations and advocates, including leaders from transgender and houseless communities.
- 2. Legislative and budget solutions like non-law enforcement first-responders, restorative justice models, investments in mental, behavioral, and emotional health and housing supports.** Upstream approaches to health and safety like these need to be part of our solution.
- 3. Address the initial concerns shared through a letter with several coalition partners like Unite Oregon & AFSCME to LC 49, 78, 79, 80, 81, and 83.** Armed law enforcement, whether they are School Resource Officers, police officers, or ICE, maintain white comfort at the expense of Black, indigenous, people of color, and do not equate to public safety for our communities. We'd like the opportunity to discuss the size and functions of policing in Oregon and the opportunity to shift away from an overreliance on police and toward an investment in the health and well-being of our communities.

My personal philosophy on policy making is policy doesn't come before people, people come before policy. Therefore, I ask that meaningful engagement with BIPOC communities continues so that our voices can be heard, our experiences taken seriously, and solutions of and by our communities are implemented. Perhaps then we can begin shifting the conversation from Black deaths, to Black Lives.



I look forward to working with you all on these efforts, thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Valderrama', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Andrea Valderrama, Advocacy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color