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Chairs Manning and Bynum, and Members of the Joint Committee,

We are Next Up Action Fund, formerly known as the Bus Project, our mission is to build political power with diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. As an organization that builds political power and strong, effective leadership pipelines for diverse young people, our work and our communities are greatly impacted by the reality that the State continually prioritizes police over our futures. Oregon's Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities are calling for immediate shifts in policing policy. While we demand swift and bold action, we are also asking that the legislature solidifies a process that meaningfully engages the constituents demanding justice, and follows through on the recommendations that the Black community has made clear for decades. There are many plans and reports put forward by Black-led and centered organizations that highlight specific policies and needs in the Black community, and those should be at the core of the policies put forward. Next Up Action Fund values Black lives and is committed to dismantling Oregon's legacy of racism and ongoing injustices; dismantling and abolishing racist policies is a critical start.

**As previously requested, we continue to call for the establishment to fund 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. These communities have identified a need for the time and resources to produce a community-driven long-term plan and subsequent policy, practice, and resource proposals for decision-makers to engage with.

Additionally, Next Up Action Fund supports calls to address qualified immunity in the next special session. **Officers should not be allowed to shield themselves with the doctrine of qualified immunity which has served to protect officers from accountability and deny families justice.** Recently, Colorado passed Senate Bill 20, which among other important provisions creates a new venue for discrimination and brutality claims under their state constitution in state court, by creating a damages action and providing for attorneys' fees. Oregon should move to address qualified immunity by allowing victims of police misconduct to enforce their civil rights and bring a lawsuit against officers who must be held accountable.

Additionally, the legislature should work to strengthen and improve policies past in the last special session:

- **Serious loopholes exist in HB 4203 and should be remedied in the next special session.** The language of the bill only prohibits force that restricts a person's breathing or circulation if the officer does so *knowingly*. The bill also allows for the continued training of officers on physical force that can restrict breathing as a "defensive maneuver". These loopholes allow not only the training of but the continued use of chokeholds, and law enforcement can simply declare they were acting in self-defense or they didn't know they were restricting breathing in order to avoid discipline.
- **We implore the legislature to outright ban the use of tear gas, a weapon of war, in Oregon.** Furthermore, the legislature should take further action to immediately prohibit the use of all indiscriminate weapons and provide enough flexibility to capture weapons that we know of today, like tear gas and flash bangs, and future indiscriminate weapons that we do not know of yet.
- **We respectfully request that SB 1604 be amended to add a statewide floor on discipline and ensure discipline matrices are not subject to collective bargaining.** Allowing discipline for excessive use of force to be an issue that unions can negotiate away through collective bargaining is extremely problematic and strongly limits our ability to hold officers accountable.

Beyond these concepts, **we encourage the legislature to look at how we can move to shrink the size and functions of policing in Oregon and reimagine what safety looks like in our communities.** As the legislature, you create the conditions for our State to thrive, and we ask that you commit to the ongoing process of transformational change and community-led efforts 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. These communities have identified a need for the time and resources to produce a community-driven long-term plan and subsequent policy, practice, and resource proposals for decision-makers to engage with.

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Thank you,

Devin Ruiz  
Community Engagement Organizer

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