

Support for HB 3064: The Accountability and Equity Act

My name is *Ageya Achili Diglihi*. My settler name is Rebecca Whetstine. I am writing in support of HB 3064: The Accountability and Equity Act. I feel graced to live in Oregon despite the many challenges Oregon holds for Native people. Since beginning to interact with the members of the legislature, I've begun to get a sense that our elected leadership want to do right by the people. I've seen this year that, bicamerally, many of our legislators now want to look at the actual outcomes of the suite of measures that were passed that have resulted in the inequitable mass incarceration of great numbers of our fellow Oregonians. I am heartened by this and have begun to dare to hope that we are all ready to look at what constitutes accountability for the justice-involved as well as for all who enact these laws. I have felt received and heard when I have sat to testify to the conditions faced by my community, and feel sure that the concern for equity is now backed by a desire to understand the institutional conditions that keep Oregonians – and, specifically, Native American Oregonians - from experiencing equity.

I support this Act, as it provides the opportunity to create guidance for those who must police, charge, judge, jail, imprison, transition and then supervise-in-transition our mothers, fathers, friends, sisters, brothers and others. It provides the opportunity to build bridges and collaborative, learning relationships in the body of the Equity Advisory Committee. In particular, I hope that the makeup of this committee will include grassroots workers and individuals, not just organizational people. In this way we can be more certain that we are locating the best solutions to our mutually-recognized concerns regarding the over-representation of brown, black and poor bodies in the incarceration continuum as well as so many other questions of societal well-being.

I also support this Act, as it lays out explicit expectations that we will support jurisdictions in reaching the necessary outcomes to equity and justice for Oregonians. Those jurisdictions that struggle will receive the benefit of support. The promise of testable outcomes and relevant measures gives me hope. Indeed, the knowledge gained in making progress in this area just may allow us to make progress in so many of the areas that typically can lead to justice-involvement: housing, employment, education, transportation, addictions, poverty.

I ask you to pass this Act without hesitation. We in the community want very much to be in partnership with you.

Rebecca Whetstine
Project WIT (Whatever It Takes!)
Salem, OR