



March 2, 2021

Oregon House of Representatives  
Salem, Oregon 97301  
House Committee On Judiciary

Dear Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Noble and Power, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon National Organization for Women supports HB 2002, a bill to reform elements of the existing criminal justice system immediately.

This legislation addresses elements of the current codes that have contributed to mass incarceration, created the opportunity for harassment by law enforcement officers based on race, color, ethnic background, and other characteristics, and inflicted economic injustice by imperiling the freedom to work and support families through unnecessary arrest and incarceration. In particular we support these elements of this bill:

- Converting mandatory minimum sentences to presumptive sentences, allowing judges the flexibility to consider extenuating circumstances in sentencing.
- Limiting situations in which an officer can make a traffic stop based solely on operational condition of use of lights, thus eliminating opportunities to use traffic stops as harassment and eliminating the potential for follow-on conflict that can arise during these stops.
- Limiting the situations in which an officer can arrest a suspect without a warrant for misdemeanor offenses.
- Moving some low-level crimes from a list of crimes for which an arrest can be made to crimes for which a criminal citation is issued, eliminating the need to transfer the accused to a police station, subjecting the accused to the humiliation of the booking process, and inflicting economic harm from loss of freedom even for relatively short periods of time.

We also support the elements of the bill that foster recognition of and adaptation to cultural diversity. And we support the elements of the bill that strengthen efforts to return an offender to the community as a responsible citizen.

There are other bills before the legislature that call for studies to produce recommendations for criminal justice reform. HB 2002 cannot expect to address all aspects of needed reform, so further study will be needed. However, there is no reason to delay addressing some of the most egregious elements of injustice that plague our system now. HB 2002 is a vehicle for doing that immediately.

Please support the passage of this critical legislation now.

Respectfully,

Christine Chin Ryan  
President, Oregon NOW

H. Rebecca Callison  
Legislative Chair, Oregon NOW