



Health Department

March 15, 2021

House Committee on Judiciary House Subcommittee on Civil Law
900 Court St. NE - Remote 174
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2482 - Relating to public safety

Chair Power, Vice-Chair Wallan, and members of the Committee, my name is Charlene McGee and I am the REACH Program Manager for Multnomah County Health Department. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2482.

In February, the Multnomah County Health Department released a report on transportation safety focused on the County's Black population. Among many concerning findings, the report found that concerns about harassment and unfair policing were significant barriers to accessing health-supportive resources such as primary care and cultural destinations. Other reports reinforce this finding. For example, Campaign Zero found that Black Portlanders are arrested at a rate 4.3 times higher than whites.¹ The Multnomah County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council found that disparities in jailing and arrests had increased for Black residents between 2014 and 2019.² This reality creates a barrier to increasing walking biking, and transit, which is a key strategy for promoting physical activity and preventing most of the leading causes of premature death in Multnomah County.

HB 2482 would reduce unnecessary contact with police and would eliminate a crime disproportionately enforced on houseless community members, under resourced and communities of color. It is affirming of gender and cultural practices related to names and identity. Removing barriers to safe and healthy transportation makes it more likely that we can meet public health goals.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Charlene McGee
REACH Program Manager
Multnomah County Health Department

¹ Oregon Public Broadcasting, February 7 2021 ["Portland has 5th worst arrest disparities in the nation, according to compiled data"](#)

² [Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Multnomah County](#) (2019)