



March 18, 2021

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Noble and Power, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

We at Basic Rights Oregon are the leading LGBTQ advocacy organization in Oregon and we are writing to strongly support HB 2169 to improve public safety in Oregon and reform our criminal justice system by adopting the recommendations of the Racial Justice Council. As members of the Fair Shot For All Coalition, we support this bill as part of our ongoing work towards achieving racial justice in Oregon.

Communities of color in Oregon have lived through generations of white supremacist violence and systemic racism. Many people of color—especially Black Oregonians—do not feel safe in their own communities, homes, places of worship, at school, or in public spaces. The deep trauma of living in a culture of white supremacy and systemic racism has created widespread harm that impacts all of us.

That's why HB 2169 is so vital for our communities. It includes recommendations from the Criminal Justice Reform & Police Accountability Committee of the Governor's Racial Justice Council. In response to the long overdue national and local uprising for racial justice sparked by the death of George Floyd in 2020, the Council is moving Oregon forward by centering Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and immigrant voices in the development of public safety policy solutions.

The proposed reforms would accomplish the following:

- **Promote restorative justice:** Encourage greater use of restorative justice practices with funding provided to the Criminal Justice Commission
- **Prevent unnecessary deportations:** Make diversion possible for immigrants accused of crime, so they can perform community service, pay restitution and/or receive treatment in their community, rather than automatic deportation and traumatic family separation.
- **Expand police oversight:** Authorize the creation of a police oversight agency or board by city and county governments
- **Improve transparency:** Improve public access to personnel files for police officers who have been investigated for misconduct
- **Require police identification:** Require law enforcement officers to inform a stopped person of reason for the stop and that they have the right to refuse a request to search
- **Ensure informed police searches:** Require law enforcement officers to provide name and badge number if the stop doesn't result in an arrest or citation.

As an organization that centers transgender and racial justice in everything we do, we recognize that HB 2169 is a necessary step in moving Oregon forward when it comes to addressing the widespread racial disparities that exist in Oregon's criminal justice system.

And the numbers are alarming: Black Americans are five times more likely to be pulled over in a vehicle, even though white Americans are three times more likely to have contraband than people of color. Profiling leads to disproportionate arrests and conviction rate among communities of color, and we must address these destructive practices through HB 2169.

The policies developed by the Criminal Justice Reform and Police Accountability Committee will make all of us safer by centering those who are most disproportionately harmed by our criminal justice system. Together, we can make Oregon a place where we all have a fair shot and feel safe.

We urge your yes vote on HB 2169.