



PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFETY & JUSTICE

Submitted to the Committee on Judiciary
March 18, 2021

Testimony in Support HB 2169
By Andy Ko, Executive Director, Partnership for Safety & Justice

For the Record, I'm Andy Ko, Executive Director of Partnership for Safety and Justice.

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, and Members of the Committee,

At Partnership for Safety & Justice, we advocate for public safety and criminal justice policies that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both. For over 20 years, our work has promoted public safety with policies to help keep families together, reduce racial disparities, and make essential investments in communities across Oregon.

Following the murder of George Floyd and increased calls for justice reform from the Black Lives Matter Movement and many others, Governor Brown commendably convened a Racial Justice Council with subcommittees to develop policy options in a range of subject areas including criminal justice. Now Senator Kayse Jama, Lamar Wise and Paul Solomon led the Criminal Justice Committee with support from the Governor's staff, including Constantin Severe, Jeff Rhoades and others. I want to thank them and all of my fellow committee members for their efforts and the opportunity to engage in this work together.

Our work since October of last year has been ambitious and today before you is a bill that emphasizes some of the core values and goals of the Racial Justice Council and its committees. These are shared by PSJ, and include:

- Funding for Restorative Justice. We fully support the piloting of restorative justice programs to address the need for healing, which is generally lacking in our current approach to assigning accountability for crime. We point to the organization Common Justice, led by Danielle Sered, which is a model program out of New York City that is first and foremost centered around the needs of crime survivors and the goal of racial justice.
- Non-Plea Diversion. Immigrant Oregonians are disproportionately and unfairly impacted when they are forced to plead guilty as a condition of diversion and face the risk of permanent separation from their families and communities. We believe this reform will promote a safer, stronger Oregon, while keeping families together and giving all Oregonians an opportunity to thrive.
- Police Stops and "Consent Searches." Ensuring that the rights of people stopped by police are protected is an essential element of a society based on the rule of law and ending the disproportionate mistreatment of people of color by our justice system.

Additionally, protection of these rights should be ensured by including a provision that excludes evidence seized in any search where legal requirements were not met, as is the case with other unlawful searches.

- Police Oversight. Effective oversight of the immense power wielded by law enforcement is essential in a free society, so PSJ supports this provision. But, sufficient oversight is the starting point. There is also a need for a dramatic shift in policing culture and public expectations regarding the best response to emergency situations. For example, investing in a model like the Cahoots program pioneered in Lane County (HB 2417) is an essential element. Applying the right response to health and other human crises that are not immediate threats to personal or public safety will yield better outcomes for individuals and society as a whole.