

TO: House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Danita Harris
RE: Statement of support for HB 2169
DATE: 3/17/21



Chair Bynum, Vice Chairs Noble and Powers, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is to eliminate hunger and its root causes. We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today; and we build community power to dismantle systems and policies that drive hunger and poverty. Systemic racism is a driver of hunger.

Public safety should make the public feel safe. However, Oregon's criminal justice system continues to disproportionately detain, criminalize, and harm communities of color. Oregon must approach public safety and police accountability with a racial justice lens that provides transparency and accountability and restores Oregonians who are impacted by the criminal justice system.

Oregon Food Bank supports HB 2169 because we believe all of us deserve a public safety system that truly keeps all of us safe. HB 2169 addresses institutional racism through greater use of restorative justice practices, reduction of unnecessary deportations and family separation, and increased police accountability. These policies are a direct response to the long overdue national and local uprising for racial justice sparked by the death of George Floyd in 2020.

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.

Public health and economic impacts of the pandemic have fallen hardest on people who have faced systemic inequities for generations: communities of color, immigrants and refugees, single parents and caregivers, and our trans and gender non-conforming neighbors. We look forward to the changes brought forward by the Racial Justice Council.

We urge you to **vote yes on HB 2169** because we have the opportunity to rebuild and emerge stronger so that we can end hunger for good in our communities. This is our moment to embrace our shared values, care for each other and take bold action in support of *all* Oregonians.

Thank you,

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