



April 15, 2021

Joint Subcommittee On Public Safety
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in support of HB 5012 which includes budget support for SB 48 (pre-trial release bill) and SB 397 (expungement bill)

Co-Chairs Gorsek and Sollman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for values-based budget decisions on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon). The ACLU of Oregon is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 28,000 members statewide.

- **Budget decisions are moral decisions, and the State of Oregon’s budget decisions should center the value of supporting our communities most marginalized and impacted by systemic inequities.**

Oregon is a state that values supporting and caring for all of our communities – especially communities in Oregon that are the most marginalized and impacted by systemic inequities like racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, socioeconomic injustice, and other types of oppression. These communities include Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities, immigrants and refugees, people with varying abilities, LGBTQ+ communities, and people experiencing poverty and other socio-economic injustices.

A budget is a moral document. In order to live out our values, we need to support our justice system – not just with words but with resources. When the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) does not have sufficient resources to work well and effectively, this disproportionately impacts BIPOC communities, as well as the victims and survivors of violence such as domestic abuse, sexual assault, and gun violence – all areas of harm experienced significantly by our BIPOC communities.

- **The values of equity and justice would be supported by approving an OJD budget that supports the new approaches to criminal and racial justice currently before the Oregon state legislature.**

The ACLU of Oregon has heard from Oregonians across the state that we need to make real change with racial justice work – and as part of this work, make our criminal justice system

more fair and equitable – to address the disproportionate harm of the criminal justice system on BIPOC and low-income individuals and communities.

This session, we have been working with Oregon’s legislators on important racial and criminal justice reform in areas such as pretrial release (SB 48), and expungement (SB 397). Consistent with our values as Oregonians, we ask you to approve the OJD’s budget as set out in HB 5012, including the parts of the budget that will support the following legislation:

SB 48 – Pre-Trial Release. The ACLU of Oregon is working hard to ensure that SB 48, the legislation on pre-trial release is passed. But in order to be effective, our courts must have the resources they need to implement the policy changes. OJD has submitted a budget request specific to implementing a statewide pre-trial release program, requesting \$4.1M GF and 21 positions.

SB 397 – Expungement. Eliminates fees and waiting periods during expungement processes which is essential to ending mass incarceration, a driver of racial inequities in Oregon.

To support SB 397’s effectiveness, a request has been made to reallocate \$3 million from the American Rescue Plan monies to support this legislation. These one-time monies would be used to hire a 3rd party to re-code and clean up Oregon’s criminal records systems. This clean up process of records is critical to the effectiveness of the expungement legislation.

The positive impact of this legislation across Oregon will be monumental. This funding of \$3 million from the American Rescue Plan will make it possible for nearly 1.5 million Oregonians with convictions to have a real chance at successful reintegration into our workplaces and communities.

As an Oregonian, I believe our state is one where we walk the talk – where our state’s budgeting decisions reflect our values. Please fund the Oregon Judicial Department’s proposed budget in order to create greater justice and equity for all Oregonians, especially our most marginalized and vulnerable communities.

The ACLU of Oregon urges your support of HB 5012.

Thank you,



Sandy Chung
Executive Director
ACLU of Oregon