

TO: House Committee on Rules
FROM: Danita Harris
RE: Support for HB 2002
DATE: 04/30/2020



Dear Chair Smith-Warner, Vice Chairs Drazan and Holvey, and members of the Committee,

I'm writing on behalf of the Oregon Food Bank in support of HB 2002. 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. Our network of 21 regional food banks and 1,400 partner agencies continues to work tirelessly to ensure that Oregonians are able to put food on the table in the wake of this pandemic.

Community leaders from the Governor's Racial Justice Council, Transforming Justice Coalition, Fair Shot for All Coalition, and Legislative leaders from the BIPOC Caucus have joined forces and are working together to create true public safety for our communities. Guided by experts and advocates in the field, we developed proposals that equitably strengthen our communities, including culturally specific programs, housing resources, crime survivor services, and addiction treatment.

Our communities are calling for urgent action to transform our public safety system and address the structural racism that is at the root of our criminal justice system. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement have exposed systemic injustices in starker light, and it is time to work toward a vision of public safety that is built on accountability, healing, and opportunity.

Widespread racial disparities exist throughout Oregon's criminal justice system. Black people represent 2.2 percent of Oregon's population but 9.3 percent of the state's prison population. Additionally, both ethnic and racial disparities were identified in traffic and pedestrian stop data submitted by the Oregon State Police, according to 2019 reporting from the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission.

To address the devastating impacts Oregon's criminal justice system has had on communities of color and create a more equitable system that provides true public safety, TRANSFORMING JUSTICE 2021 (HB 2002) will: Reinvest in culturally specific, community-based services by dedicating 20% of Justice Reinvestment funds to culturally-specific organizations and culturally-responsive service providers.

Additionally, this will end the use of arrest and incarceration as the default response to unmet healthcare and other basic needs by limiting an officer's authority to make a warrantless arrest

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and reducing pretextual stops by limiting the types of infractions for which an officer can initiate a traffic stop.

As a Black Oregonian, I know all too well how disparaging our system of justice is to our BIPOC community. HB 2002 provides an opportunity to begin the work of transforming our justice system by providing a path towards reformative justice by providing support to survivors by increasing funding for and access to community-based victim services by changing the Justice Reinvestment (JRI) funding structure and Reinvest in culturally specific, community-based services.

HB 2002 will ensure informed police searches by requiring law enforcement officers to provide name and badge number if the stop doesn't result in an arrest or citation while also advancing equity by requiring race and gender data collection to ensure that funds are reaching impacted communities

For these reasons and more, we urge your support and the passage of HB 2002.

Danita Harris,
Oregon Food Bank

