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SB 1510 will address public safety

Floyd Prozanski and James Manning Guest Opinion

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Creating public safety solutions that work for all Oregonians is difficult work. Leading up to this legislative session, however, we successfully developed a set of essential reforms that we need to advance safety, healing, and accountability for all communities across the state.

Over the last few months, we convened a workgroup that brought together diverse public safety stakeholders, including Black and brown community leaders, law enforcement, and people with lived experiences of being most harmed and least helped by our public safety system.

We spent many hours having difficult and dynamic conversations to find the best path forward for everyone. We listened to each other's priorities, concerns, and experiences.

Our hard work culminated in SB 1510, which makes several essential public safety proposals.

SB 1510 mandates training for probation and parole officers in de-escalation and trauma-informed responses, reduces unnecessary contact between law enforcement and drivers for minor infractions like having a single taillight out, and allocates \$10 million to mental health treatment, housing services and other services that promote healing and public safety for communities of color who are less likely to access the vital services they need to heal.

There is agreement on SB 1510. This reasonable proposal will help address the systemic racism in our law enforcement system.

Why is this important? Because systemic racial disparities are unfortunately embedded into the fabric of our society, including in our public safety and criminal justice systems. As legislators in the country's only state that was founded as being for whites only, we have a responsibility to address the practices that contribute to persistent disparities.

People who are not impacted by racial disparities may not see it as a problem, but it is. Communities of color continue to see disparities in traffic stops throughout Oregon. And when

it comes to investing in treatment and healing services, culturally specific providers traditionally have been excluded from funding that would help them deliver the resources that BIPOC Oregonians need.

We support SB 1510 not just as leaders in the Senate, but as people who have given our professional lives to the public safety of our communities. Senator Floyd Prozanski has been a prosecutor in Oregon for 34 years; and Senator James Manning is a former corrections officer, former police officer, and served 24 years in the U.S. Army. We take the public safety of our communities seriously.

Every Oregonian deserves to feel safe in their community. SB 1510 is one of this session's most important bills to bring us closer to this shared vision for our state. Now we need to make sure it passes.

The collaboration that led to SB 1510 is one Oregonians can all be proud of. It is an example of our commitment to diverse stakeholders who do the hard work of coming together on critical issues and striving to find common ground.

We're looking to our colleagues to share this commitment by supporting SB 1510 and taking steps to make Oregon safer and more just for everyone.

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