



OREGON WORKING FAMILIES PARTY

VOTE YOUR VALUES

D:
To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
From: Danita Harris, Oregon Working Families Party
Re: Support for Transforming Justice 2022, SB 1510

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Danita Harris, I am the State Director of the Oregon Working Families Party. We are a political home for a multiracial and multigenerational populace of working-class Oregonians that believe in and fight for an economy that works for us all.

Every Oregonian deserves to feel safe and be treated with respect and dignity. However, many of us, especially Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color, feel vulnerable and unprotected in our own communities, homes, and workplaces.

As a native Black Oregonian I have witnessed both my brother, a Gates Millennium Scholar, and my father a proud active duty veteran, be mistreated and the hands of the police for simply existing. Once for having the gall to eat a late dinner in the car before driving home, another time for making the conscious decision to ride a bike to work instead of driving. Both of these instances resulted in mistreatment, further loss of trust, no tickets, no arrests. I live in the continued state of fear that one day this story will end with an even greater catastrophe.

Transforming Justice 2022 (SB 1510) will reduce racial disparities in traffic stops by making a broken headlight, taillight, brake light, or license plate light a “secondary offense,” meaning that an officer can issue a citation only if a driver *is pulled over for something else*. By changing how traffic stops are made, we can limit unnecessary stops, ensuring Oregonians have a decreased risk of experiencing excessive force and violence.

People who have been held accountable for harm should have a chance to succeed. SB 1510 ensures that people who have caused harm are responsible for that harm, after which they would have an opportunity to rebuild their lives. It also ensures that crime survivors have the resources they need to heal and invests in culturally specific services for communities of color throughout Oregon.

When we invest public safety dollars into our communities, we reduce prison use and recidivism and increase safety. SB 1510 will create the Justice Reinvestment Equity Program to fund services that promote racial equity, address racial disparities prevalent in Oregon’s criminal justice system.

I urge your support for SB 1510 to enact these critically needed changes that are aligned with Oregonians’ vision for a public safety system rooted in racial equity, accountability, healing, and opportunity.

Thank you for your time.