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MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair

FROM: Aaron Knott, MCDA Policy Director

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of SB 1510

DATE: February 2, 2022

BACKGROUND:

Despite repeated efforts at reform, racial and ethnic disparities continue to be evident across all levels of the criminal justice system. As we address our public safety challenges with an eye towards equity, harm reduction, and improved outcomes across Oregon, we must focus our efforts on addressing these disparities across all systems. Too often, this work fails to adequately include the communities most impacted, overemphasizing the perspectives of system-based and law enforcement actors, including prosecutors, and underemphasizing the perspectives of those most impacted by the decisions being made.

SB 1510 is an intentional step toward inclusion. Guided by a community driven dialogue truly led by impacted communities, SB 1510 represents a multifaceted proposal which addresses multiple disparity drivers across the criminal justice system, while making targeted investments to deepen culturally specific services.

SB 1510 offers a range of carefully tailored and thoroughly negotiated proposals narrowly designed to target known points of inequity throughout the criminal justice system, from the traffic code to the use of consent searches to targeted investments in culturally specific services.

SB 1510 works to ensure that all consent searches are both informed and voluntary. This reduces the possibility of forced or poorly informed consent, as well as creating a strong evidentiary record which will prevent unnecessary litigation and is consistent with best practices.

SB 1510 pushes back against the persistent issue of disparities in traffic enforcement by disallowing a stop to be made solely because of a missing headlight or taillight, violations that tend to be associated with economic hardship, not reckless behavior. Traffic stops can be dangerous for both the officer and the person being stopped - minimizing their use is appropriate, equitable, and will help to avoid disparities of enforcement.

SB 1510 deepens state investment in culturally specific, community based providers who work directly with impacted communities in providing crucial services targeted at empowering these communities and curbing over reliance on the criminal justice system.

MCDA supports SB 1510 in the interest of lowering racial disparities in our system and ultimately reducing the number of crime victims in our communities, while holding those that cause harm accountable. The process to develop this policy was exemplary in its broad inclusion of stakeholders from across the spectrum in terms of role in the criminal justice system from enforcement to lived experience. We urge your support.

Contact: Aaron Knott - MCDA Policy Director, Aaron.Knott@mcdca.us