

Tacuma Jackson

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Testimony of Tacuma Jackson in support of Oregon Senate Bill 1511.

At age 26, I was sentenced to 34 years in prison by a non-unanimous jury. I spent decades behind bars, knowing that a person in my position in any other state other than Louisiana would have walked free. That non-unanimous jury verdict not only impacted my life, but the lives of everyone I knew and loved. The pain of my conviction reverberated – and continues to be felt – far beyond me, the individual immediately impacted.

It also robbed my community of my positive presence. Since being out, I have been involved in community efforts, non-profit boards, and advocating for underserved communities. I have also been an active member of my family.

So today, I ask you to pass SB 1511 not for me, but for everyone else harmed by this KKK backed law. For the children who lost their father, the neighbors who lost their friend, the wife who lost her partner to incarceration. I ask you to pass this bill for the advocates I left behind in prison who have committed themselves to justice despite having been failed by the system that claims to deliver it. For the jurors whose dissenting voices were ignored in my trial and so many others. For the belief in a legal system that gives every Oregonian a shot at justice in accordance with our country's Constitution. For the vast coalition who has come together to address this issue. And most of all, I ask you to pass this bill for the people still in prison – the Oregonians either physically behind bars or technically free but still caged by their criminal record – whose cases are not active but to whom the harm done has been no less significant. Please do this for them. Thank you for your time and consideration.