



February 2, 2022

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

On behalf of Pro-Choice Oregon, we would like to share our strong support for SB 1510, to improve public safety in Oregon and reform our criminal justice system. As members of the Fair Shot For All Coalition, we support this bill as part of our ongoing work to achieve racial justice in Oregon.

Pro-Choice Oregon works to ensure everyone in Oregon can make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, raising healthy families, and choosing legal abortion. Everyone—regardless of their circumstances—deserves the tools, health care and education they need to be empowered in making these personal decisions to decide if, when and how they would like to raise a family.

We believe every person deserves to raise a family in an environment that is free from violence, and we recognize racism as a root cause of deep health disparities in our state. In solidarity with community partners, we are committed to long-term action needed to dismantle systemic racism. We recognize the criminal justice system as an institution that often robs people of bodily autonomy, and imposes state-sanctioned violence most often against Black, Indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC). This system, built on a foundation of white supremacy, furthers generational trauma and poverty. With a sole focus on punishment, victims and survivors of crime—particularly survivors of color—do not receive adequate support and are often further harmed by the system intended to keep us all “safe.”

Oregonians want and deserve a criminal justice system that is equitable and accountable. We believe that people who have caused harm should be held responsible for that harm, after which they should have an opportunity to rebuild their lives, and crime survivors should have adequate resources needed to heal. 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 support SB 1510 as reform needed to strengthen communities, shrink the correctional system, address and prioritize the needs of victims and survivors, and insure the people most impacted by our criminal justice system are centered and present in policy reform.

Both the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement have exposed systemic injustices in starker light. Widespread racial disparities continue to plague 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. Incarceration also greatly exacerbates the harms of racial targeting by police. Each time we lock someone up, we also sentence their family members to traumatic separation and financial hardship. Two in three families had difficulty meeting basic needs as a result of their loved one's incarceration. **70 percent of these families were caring for children under 18.**

To address the devastating impacts our criminal justice system has had on communities of color in Oregon, SB 1510 will:

- **Support survivors by increasing funding for and access to community-based victim services** by changing Justice Reinvestment (JRI) funding structure to allocate 15% of available funds to victims, instead of 10%; and fund victim services that support victims who are incarcerated.
- **Reinvest in culturally specific, community-based services** by dedicating 20% of Justice Reinvestment funds to culturally-specific organizations and culturally-responsive service providers.
- **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, and reducing pretextual stops by limiting the types of infractions for which an officer can initiate a traffic stop.
- **Limit racial bias-based arrests** by requiring law enforcement officers to inform a stopped person of reason for the stop and that they have the right to refuse a request to search and by requiring law enforcement officers to provide name and badge number if the stop doesn't result in an arrest or citation.

We call on leaders in the legislature to support SB 1510 and enact these critically needed changes that are aligned with Oregonians' vision for a public safety system rooted in equity, accountability, healing, and opportunity.

Thank you for your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Jeanine Morales
Deputy Director
Pro-Choice Oregon

