

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

My name is Elizabeth Braatz, and I am a 4th-year student at Western Oregon University, and I am studying Criminal Justice.

Every Oregonian deserves to feel safe and be treated with dignity. But 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 student, this legislation is important to me because I am a Black, Hispanic, Indigenous woman. I am not immune to the disparities and systemic and institutional barriers that have been politically enforced at the state level against communities of color. I attend an institution that is a rural area of Oregon, and I do not go out past dark. In Monmouth, OR, confederate flags are flown at restaurants, and confederate flags are flown through campus. Being a person of color in Monmouth is like walking on eggshells all the time. As I write this testimony, I reflect back on my college experience, and a prevalent memory that sends chills through my body was the first week, of my first term at Western Oregon University. I was going to get dinner with four other friends who are also people of color. The driver of the car was a Black male, and as we drove through campus, a police officer came from behind us and pulled us over. We all felt our stomachs churn into knots as the police officer walked towards the car. In complete silence, we all knew what this situation could become. My voice was stuck in my throat, but I so desperately wanted to say “we love you” before the police officer arrived. The reason we were pulled over was that the driver had stopped a foot over the crosswalk at a stop sign. This Senate Bill directly focuses on minimizing disparities in traffic stops in relation to broken headlights, tail lights, brake lights, or license plates lights. Traffic stops increase the likelihood of violence, harm, and death within communities of color at disproportionate rates. This Senate Bill will eliminate some of the fear that people who look like me feel every, single, day. However, this bill would be just the beginning.

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.

Please support SB 1510 and 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.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Braatz