



February 28, 2022

Re: Invest in Community Gun Violence Prevention

Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey and Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction: Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of \$15 million in funding to address gun violence in Oregon, including investments in community-based organizations and violence intervention and prevention programs. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Deputy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color, an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations engaged in collective action for racial justice.

We all deserve to be safe in our homes and communities. But over the course of the pandemic and resulting economic crisis, cities around the country have seen serious increases in gun violence that remain devastatingly high, and it is our Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color who have been most impacted. Despite the important work of community-based organizations, we lack the resources we need to adequately intervene in and prevent gun violence in this moment of crisis.

Culturally specific and culturally responsive approaches are critical to support those at risk of gun violence, as well as survivors of violence. Many of CCC's member organizations already serve their communities and work to prevent violence through education, crisis response, job opportunities, housing assistance, physical and mental healthcare, and trauma-informed support for survivors and those at risk. These culturally-specific organizations have deep community knowledge and understand the types of services needed by impacted individuals and communities.

In addition to these critical services and programs, \$15 million in dedicated funding will support these organizations to develop long-term, sustained capacity to serve individuals, families, and communities who are at risk, and to help us identify the most effective strategies to end gun violence in Oregon.

The heartbreaking losses that our communities face right now cannot be understated. One loss is one too many, but at the current scale, we risk truly devastating harm to communities. This violence is an acute public health crisis that has accompanied the pandemic, and recovery is only possible when we can provide the culturally specific services and care—and ultimately the safety and security—that our friends, family, neighbors, and young people need and deserve. We can take meaningful action on gun violence by allocating \$15 million in the state budget for gun violence prevention and intervention. It is an investment that cannot wait.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Lee", written in a cursive style.

Jenny Lee, Deputy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color