

FAIRSHOT FOR ALL

March 14, 2023

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

The Fair Shot for All Coalition urges your support of Senate Bill 817 as one of many needed solutions to help address the public defense crisis in Oregon. By expanding the eligibility to pre-plea probation and diversion, the bill will allow more Oregonians accused of low level crimes a pathway to take responsibility and work toward charge dismissals through counseling and/or community service, reducing the need for public defense attorneys while also improving outcomes for the community.

With our public defense system so chronically under-resourced, people accused of crime are either waiting indefinitely for a public defender to become available or are negotiating plea deals without adequate legal support. This leads to system imbalances and unjust case outcomes. Victims and survivors of crime are also harmed when justice is delayed and the system is too overloaded to center their individual needs or even support a trial happening because the accused's right to representation and a speedy trial are violated.

What happens in our criminal legal system impacts all of us, but it disproportionately harms Black and brown Oregonians as they are more likely to both be arrested and be victimized by crime.

Along with other solutions to support the public defense workforce, SB 817 will help decrease the caseloads of public defenders and courts and provide better access to justice for all Oregonians.

Please vote YES on SB 817.

Heather Stuart
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Fair Shot for All

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