

# CANNABIS WORKERS COALITION

March 20, 2023

Dear Chair Bynum and the Honorable Members of the House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business,

My name is Savina Fierro and I am the co-founder and executive director of the Cannabis Workers Coalition, a nonprofit worker center advocating for equitable labor practices in the cannabis industry. I am writing to ask you for your continued support on the Oregon Economic Equity Investment Act, or HB 3431.

The Economic Equity Investment Program (EEIP), created in 2022, directed Business Oregon to provide one-time funding to community-based organizations with solutions that build generational wealth for communities experiencing multiple economic risk factors. HB 3431 asks the legislature to make ongoing, holistic investments with cannabis taxes to achieve positive change in the intersecting inequities of poverty and substance abuse.

Black people were arrested at 4 times the rate of their White counterparts in Oregon for cannabis possession despite usage being equal across races. The criminal justice system stripped wealth from Black families with documented targeting of Black communities like draconian War on Drugs laws. Oregon faces an imperative to address economic justice with the legalization of cannabis. Closing the wealth gap is a root cause solution to pressing concerns facing Oregon. The communities at the bottom of the wealth gap are the same communities experiencing the highest substance abuse mortality rates.

That is why it is so important to me and the workers we represent that you support HB 3431.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Savina Fierro  
Executive Director, Cannabis Workers Coalition