

Submitter: Sara Williams

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB3431

Dear Chair Bynum and the Honorable Members On Economic Development and Small Business.

My name is Sara Williams, and I live in Salem Oregon. I am writing to you today, to request your support with HB 3431, the Oregon Economic Equity Investment Act. I feel it is vital that we are all doing something to bridge the gap in the economic instability between the Black, Native, and Latinx communities with the other racial and ethnic groups who are otherwise thriving. Especially when these are the communities that are most affected by the criminalization of cannabis, and face a lifetime of limited opportunities.

For example, my own cannabis charges hindered my ability to complete my degree, affecting my future career, housing, and ability to start a business, and I am only one person. But I know how powerful it would have been to have had the chance to finish school or get a home loan or even start a small business and how that could have made all the difference between thriving and surviving for my children and I. We can fix all these problems after the fact, when it's even more difficult and costly, or we can give people the economic stability they need to build a better future for themselves and their children/family. People will only flourish with economic equality, and stability. When you are always struggling to make it paycheck to paycheck just for survival, it can be such a burden on your mental health. Often times it is not easy to see how deeply a person can be affected by being so limited, or how those stresses can reach so many aspects of ones livelihood. Or even more importantly how the lack of economic equity can roll right into generational poverty. Having access to the proper resources and opportunities for growth could be literally saving lives, and it is a chance to add value to our people in ways that will in turn add value to all of our communities and that will benefit, our county and our state. Recognizing the ties between economic justice and behavioral health is paramount in creating a solution here, and this is why it is so important to me that we have your support on HB 3431.

Sincerely, Sara Williams