



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
SAFETY & JUSTICE**

**Submitted to the House Committee on
Economic Development and Small Business
Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023
Testimony
Regarding HB 3431**

By Andy Ko, Executive Director, Partnership for Safety & Justice

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Morgan, Vice-Chair Nguyen, and Members of the Committee,

Partnership for Safety & Justice advocates for public safety and criminal justice policies that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both. For over 20 years, our work has promoted public safety with policies that keep families together, reduce racial disparities, and invest in communities across Oregon.

We are so appreciative of the chief sponsors of HB 3431 for bringing this important legislation forward. Many of the chief sponsors are ones we have worked with previously to make important changes to Oregon's criminal justice system that have made our state safer and more equitable.

The intention of this legislation to address significant economic inequities that persist for historically underrepresented communities in Oregon is something that Partnership for Safety & Justice is very supportive of. HB 3431 is very aligned with the important work that Partnership for Safety & Justice does on a daily basis, but for its potential impact on the success of Measure 110 (2020).

Partnership for Safety & Justice is taking a neutral position on HB 3431 for this reason. Measure 110 made Oregon the first state to shift from a punitive approach, which has always landed most heavily on people of color and low-income communities, to a health-centered response to drug use. Essential to that transition were both an end to the criminalization of addiction and the provision of treatment, harm reduction, and overdose prevention services.

These programs are now being established through Oregon's Behavioral Health Resource Networks across the state. Many of the recipients provide culturally specific and other services, such as housing stability and peer support, that are essential but have always been underfunded in Oregon.

At Partnership for Safety & Justice, we fear that an unintended consequence of significant reduction in resources for Measure 110 programs will lead to calls for the recriminalization of drug users, That would lead to heightened criminalization of unhoused individuals, people coping with mental illness, and gross racial disparities in arrests, prosecution, and incarceration. Such criminalization and disparities have been part of America's "War on Drugs" for decades. In



the short time that Measure 110 has been in effect, racial disparities in drug arrests overall have decreased by 85%.

We remain extremely grateful for the support that sponsors of this bill have extended to many of Partnership for Safety & Justice's policy reforms. We will always be interested in working with you to find ways to provide deserved and needed investment for Oregon's historically underserved communities that have been too often denied. Thank you.