

Chair and Members of the House Rules Committee:

My name is David Yuen Tam. I serve as President of the Asian American Council of Oregon and President of the Oregon Asian Celebration. I have been an active community member in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, and I am a two-term Commissioner of the Oregon Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs. I write today in strong support of SB 1516A.

This legislation is not abstract policy to our community — it addresses a lived reality. Over the past several years, Oregon's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) families have experienced repeated, organized burglaries that specifically target AAPI households. In Lane County and across the state, these incidents have occurred in waves, creating an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that extends well beyond the individual victims.

As described in the supporting materials for SB 1516A, one critical provision of this omnibus bill restores judicial discretion to consider flight risk and danger to the community when making pretrial release determinations. In cases involving organized burglary crews operating across jurisdictions, the inability to meaningfully assess flight risk has resulted in defendants being released, only to flee and avoid trial. This denies victims accountability and erodes confidence in our justice system.

Within our AAPI community, the impact has been profound. Families have expressed fear about leaving their homes for work. Community members have hesitated to attend cultural events, including those we host through the Oregon Asian Celebration, because of concerns that they may be surveilled or targeted. Some victims have even been burglarized more than once. The psychological harm — the erosion of safety and belonging — cannot be overstated.

SB 1516A does not eliminate due process, nor does it mandate detention. It restores balanced judicial authority to make individualized determinations based on real, demonstrable risk factors. That balance is essential. Public safety and civil liberties are not mutually exclusive; they depend on a justice system that functions effectively and equitably.

As a former Commissioner on the Oregon Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, I have worked at the state level on issues affecting AAPI communities. What we are seeing in Oregon mirrors patterns emerging nationally: organized criminal groups exploiting systemic gaps, disproportionately targeting Asian households, and relying on mobility to evade accountability. This is not simply a Eugene issue or a Lane County issue. It is a statewide and national matter that requires a thoughtful and firm response.

All Oregonians deserve to feel safe in their homes. No family should feel that their race makes them a target. SB 1516A strengthens judicial tools to address organized, race-targeted crime while preserving due process and individualized review. It promotes accountability, restores community confidence, and affirms that Oregon will not tolerate patterns of crime that disproportionately harm vulnerable communities.

I respectfully urge you to do the right thing and support SB 1516A.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Yuen Tam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Sincerely,

David Yuen Tam

President, Asian American Council of Oregon

President, Oregon Asian Celebration

Two-Term Commissioner, Oregon Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs

Eugene, Oregon