

June 17, 2013

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. For the record, my name is Demetria Espinoza and I am representing the Coalition of Communities of Color. The Coalition of Communities of Color submits this testimony in support of Oregon's End Profiling Act, Senate Bill 560.

The Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) has existed since 2001 and is an alliance of culturally-specific community based organizations with representatives from the following communities: African, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American, and Slavic. The primary role of the CCC is to advocate for racial equity. The End Profiling Act was one of three top priority pieces of legislation as voted by CCC members to engage in this session.

Public safety and criminal justice are both issues that are very important to our communities. The use of profiling whether based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, natural origin or other factors is a serious concern within our communities. The City of Portland's report on racial profiling in 2006 showed that African Americans and Latinos were stopped more frequently by law enforcement than Whites. The disproportionate number of people of color stopped by law enforcement underscores the need for adequate training and mechanisms of accountability to prevent profiling. The act of profiling is a violation of fairness and undermines the system's goal of public safety.

The use of profiling operates on mistrust and fear which impacts the relationship that community organizations have built with law enforcement. Profiling goes against public safety goals and further discourages our communities from calling upon law enforcement in times of need. Creating a system of accountability and mechanisms to train officers on anti-profiling practices will better enhance officers' ability to serve the community. SB 560 creates opportunities to rebuild trust within communities where it has been shaken.

We urge the leadership of law enforcement officials to build stronger trusting relationships with communities of color. Discrimination in any form adversely impacts our communities' health, well-being and opportunity. Thank you again for your time. Please, support the End Profiling Act.

Respectfully,
Coalition of Communities of Color

