



March 15, 2021

To: House Committee on Judiciary House Subcommittee on Civil Law  
From: Zach Winston, Policy Director

Re: **Support for HB 2482: Equitable Transit Access**

Chair Power, Vice-Chair Wallan, and members of the Committee,

The goal of the Oregon Justice Resource Center (OJRC) is to promote civil rights and improve legal representation for communities that have often been underserved in the past: people living in poverty and people of color among them. We work in collaboration with like-minded organizations to maximize our reach to serve underrepresented populations, to train future public interest lawyers, and to educate our community on issues related to civil rights and civil liberties.

**The OJRC encourages your support of HB 2482.**

We firmly believe that public transportation should be accessible, safe, and equitable for all Oregonians. However, Oregonians of color and low-income Oregonians are regularly subjected to racial profiling and over-policing when using public transportation.

It is clearly established that communities of color are disproportionately impacted at all stages of the criminal justice system throughout the country and in Oregon. Portland has some of the nation's highest racial disparities in policing. According to data from Campaign Zero, Portland police arrest Black people at a per capita rate 4.3 times higher than white people.<sup>1</sup> In Multnomah County, Black adults are 4.8 times as likely as White adults to have a case issued for prosecution, and 4.6 times as likely to have a case end in a conviction. Additionally, Black adults were 4.6 times more likely to be booked into jail for a misdemeanor and 4.7 times more likely to be booked into jail for a felony than White adults. Furthermore, people of color had longer lengths of stay in jail (including both pretrial and sentenced) than White adults. Black adults stayed an average of 16.8 days, Latino adults stayed an average of 17 days; compared to an average of 11.9 days for White adults.<sup>2</sup>

HB 2482 aims to prevent over-criminalization and over-policing of low-income communities. It would accomplish this through three simple tasks that can greatly improve the experience of marginalized Oregonians on public transit:

1. Prohibits police officers from acting as fare enforcement;
2. Protects individuals who use a name different than the one on their government-issued ID; and
3. Ensures that police officers cannot charge an individual with the crime of interfering with public transit just because they do not have proof of fare payment.

The OJRC urges the Committee to ensure every Oregonian can safely use public transportation without the fear of racial profiling, over-policing, and over-criminalization by supporting HB 2482.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Zach Winston' in a cursive script.

Zach Winston  
Policy Director  
Oregon Justice Resource Center

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<sup>1</sup> Oregon Public Broadcasting, February 7 2021 "[Portland has 5th worst arrest disparities in the nation, according to compiled data.](#)"

<sup>2</sup> [Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Multnomah County](#), November 2019.