



April 15, 2021

Ways and Means Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in support of a values-based state budget that centers and prioritizes our most marginalized and vulnerable communities

Co-Chairs Steiner Hayward, Johnson, Rayfield, Vice-Chairs, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share support for the creation of a values-based state budget on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon). The ACLU of Oregon is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 28,000 members statewide.

My family and I are immigrants who chose Oregon as our home. During the 1980s, I grew up in northeast Portland, a vibrant and diverse community, and I learned the Oregonian values of community care and support.

From my lived experience, I know that each and every person and community has inherent value and dignity and deserve respect and care. The content of our character is what counts, not the color of our skin or where we were born, not our sex, gender or sexual orientation, not whether we have a disability, and not the size of our bank accounts or what part of town we live.

These are my core values and that of the ACLU of Oregon. I also know that these values are the core values of Oregonians.

- **The State of Oregon's budget is a moral document that should prioritize care and support for our most marginalized and vulnerable communities.**

A budget is a moral document. In order to live out our values, we need to ensure that the State of Oregon's budget reflects commitment to the individuals and communities in Oregon who are the most marginalized and impacted by systemic inequities like racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, socioeconomic injustice, and other types of oppression. These communities include Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities, immigrants and refugees, people with varying abilities, LGBTQ+ communities, and people experiencing poverty and other socio-economic injustices.

Based on these values, we ask Oregon's legislators to prioritize legislation in the following value areas:

1. **Housing & Houselessness.** We believe housing is a human right and that everyone has a right to rest and a right to be free from discrimination.
2. **Strengthening Democracy.** We believe in a representative and accessible democracy, leadership by individuals from BIPOC and low-income communities, and access to voting by BIPOC and low-income communities.
3. **Health & Wellness.** Reproductive justice, inclusive of abortions, are a human right, as is access to full comprehensive healthcare services. We believe no one should be discriminated against when accessing healthcare services — especially BIPOC and low-income mothers, incarcerated individuals, and survivors of domestic and sexual violence, gun violence, and other forms of violence.
4. **Education Equity & Justice.** Access to quality, free, and accessible education, including reproductive health education, is a human right, and everyone has a right to be safe from discrimination and bullying in schools. BIPOC and low-income staff, lived experience, and language abilities are valued.
5. **Consumer Privacy & Cybersecurity.** Consumer privacy is valued and protected, internet access is a right, especially for BIPOC and other marginalized and vulnerable communities. Technology should be accessible and equitably distributed, and data collection should be transparent.
6. **Criminal & Restorative Justice.** Drug use and possession should be decriminalized, and freedom should not be bought. Corruption and white supremacy must be rooted out of police and all public institutions, and accountability for those in power is essential. Freedom is a human right, and culturally-specific restorative justice is essential.
7. **Public & Community Safety.** The policing institutions in our country are deeply entrenched in racism and brutality, and we cannot allow it to continue. The inherently systemic issues of racism and brutality require immediate and permanent solutions. This requires a bold reimagining of the role police play in our society. It is time to divest from law enforcement and reinvest in the Black and Brown communities and low-income communities they unjustly target. This will be the real pathway to public and community safety for all Oregon communities.
8. **Economic Justice.** We value people over profit and public agencies equitably distributing and stewarding public goods and resources.

- **During this legislative session, the State of Oregon has the opportunity to pass and fund legislation that will create greater justice and care for all Oregonians, especially our most marginalized and vulnerable communities.**

Consistent with the values of community care and support and centering our most marginalized and vulnerable communities, we ask the Ways and Means Committee to fund the following legislation:

Strengthening Democracy

SB 571/HB 2366 — Restoration of Voting Rights. Provides a statutory change to restore voting rights to Oregonians in prison. Civic engagement of incarcerated individuals — specifically voting — increases the ability for reintegration which reduces recidivism and makes communities safer.

Health & Wellness

HB 2362 — Equal Access to Care. Creates a robust and meaningful oversight process for proposed health care mergers, acquisitions, and affiliations by placing the healthcare needs of Oregonians at the center of such transactions.

Criminal & Restorative Justice

HB 2002 & SB 48 — Racial & Criminal Justice. Comprehensive criminal justice reform, rooted in racial justice created by the Transforming Justice Coalition and the Governor's Racial Justice Council. These bills reimagine racial and criminal justice with approaches such as: community-based, culturally-specific and responsive support and services for crime victims, funding for restorative justice programs, and other reforms of criminal justice processes such as pre-trial processes.

SB 755 — Oregon Drug Addiction Treatment and Recovery Act Implementation & Defense. Oregon voters overwhelmingly passed Ballot Measure 110. Now we must ensure implementation runs smoothly and that treatment services are provided as quickly as possible.

SB 397 — Expungement. Eliminates fees and waiting periods during expungement processes which are essential to ending mass incarceration, a driver of racial inequities in Oregon.

* To support SB 397's effectiveness, a request has been made to reallocate \$3 million from the American Rescue Plan monies to support this legislation. These monies would be used to hire a 3rd party to re-code and clean up Oregon's criminal records systems. This clean up process of our records is critical to the effectiveness of the expungement legislation. The positive impact of this legislation across Oregon will be monumental. This funding of \$3 million from the American Rescue Plan will make it possible for nearly 1.5 million Oregonians with convictions to have a real chance at successful reintegration into our workplaces and communities.

Public & Community Safety

HB 3265 — Oregon Sanctuary Promise Act. Strengthens Oregon's 30 plus-year-old law to ensure local police and local resources are not used for unjust and unfair federal immigration enforcement processes by providing a private right of action, expanding courthouse sanctuary to and from courthouses, prohibiting the collection of birth country data by jails, and prohibiting ICE detention contracts. This bill will strengthen public and community safety across Oregon.

In addition to supporting funding and passage of these bills, we encourage you to review and support the people values-based budget priorities set out in the People's Budget developed by Fairshot for All, which is available at this link:

www.bitly.com/fairshot-peoples-budget.

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It is not enough to state our values. We must make sure that our actions, decisions, and priorities are based on, incorporate, and implement our values. Oregonians deserve a state budget that reflects our core values of care and support for our communities and especially our marginalized and vulnerable communities.

The ACLU of Oregon urges your support of a values-based budget that funds legislation that will create greater justice and care for all Oregonians, especially our most marginalized and vulnerable communities.

Thank you,



Sandy Chung
Executive Director
ACLU of Oregon