



Date: February 3rd, 2022
To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
From: Jennifer Parrish Taylor, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy for the Urban League of Portland
Re: Support for Transforming Justice 2022, SB 1510

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jennifer Parrish Taylor, and I am the Director of Advocacy and Public Policy with the Urban League of Portland and I am writing in support of SB 1510. The Urban League of Portland is one of Oregon's oldest civil rights and social service organizations, empowering African-Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment, health, economic security and quality of life. We do this by investing in stable housing; through workforce development; community health; education and well-being; for our youth, adults, and seniors. Our culturally specific programs and services, combined with our powerful advocacy and civic engagement, empowers Black communities to thrive across Oregon and SW Washington.

I believe that we must ask the question: why is it that Black Oregonians only make up 2% of Oregon's residents but constitute close to 10% of the state's total prison/jail population? This is symptomatic of a failed system. Fundamentally we need to reimagine how public safety happens in our communities and statewide, so that black and brown communities don't continue to be disproportionately overpoliced and subjects of police use of force. As a member of the Transforming Justice Coalition, we believe that SB 1510 is a step towards making Oregon a place where all Oregonians are not only safe but feel safe in their communities.

SB 1510 is the important unfinished business of HB 2002; for far too long, our communities have waiting for change. By making important policy changes to how public safety stops are handled, we can create a public safety system where people experiencing houselessness, mental health, and non-violent incidents are met with addiction treatment, mental health services, and other resources of support, not punishment. In the absence of adequate de-escalation techniques and training that is trauma informed, SB 1510 creates a level of protection not only for those conducting stops, but those who would be subjects of those stops. It is one tool that would be employed to keep situations from escalating to a point of no return.

Our public safety system must shift to a people centered system. By making changes to the probation and post-prison supervision system, to put the person on supervision at the center, would allow people to feel set up for success instead of failure. We believe that people who have been held accountable for harm should have a chance to succeed. But when parole or probation disrupts a person's employment, it threatens their ability to work, support their family, and thrive. By eliminating unnecessary barriers on supervision, we can promote stable homes, families, and economies. The pandemic has shown that eliminating said barriers is possible and successful.

Lastly, SB 1510 ensures that people who have caused harm are responsible for that harm, after which they would have an opportunity to rebuild their lives. It also invests in culturally-specific services that are best suited to serve communities of color throughout Oregon. When we invest public safety dollars into our communities and communities of color, we reduce prison use and recidivism and increase safety in our communities. Our current approach to distributing grant



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funds prevents us from meeting the needs of communities of color. By investing our public safety dollars more equitably, communities across Oregon will have the resources they need to feel safe, heal, and thrive

Please support SB 1510 and enact these critically needed changes that are aligned with Oregonians' vision for a public safety system rooted in equity, accountability, healing, and opportunity.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Parrish Taylor
Director of Advocacy and Public Policy
Urban League of Portland
Portland, OR 97227
Phone: 503.280.2600 ext. 609
Fax: 503.281.2612