



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
SAFETY & JUSTICE**

**Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee
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**Testimony in Support of SB 1511
By Shannon Wight, Deputy Director, Partnership for Safety & Justice**

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

At Partnership for Safety & Justice, we advocate for public safety and criminal justice policies that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both. For over 20 years, our work has promoted public safety with policies that keep families together, reduce racial disparities, and invest in communities across Oregon.

PSJ strongly supports SB 1511 as a remedy to the harm caused by non-unanimous jury convictions in Oregon. The remedy is narrowly constructed to those who can prove the harm of an unconstitutionally rendered conviction. This is the least the legislature can do given how profound the impact of imprisonment and convictions are on people's lives.

That Oregon along with only one other state, Louisiana, allowed for non-unanimous juries is surprising at first, but the racial disparities in the convictions in non-unanimous juries is consistent with Oregon being founded as a whites-only state. This system and structural harm needs to be addressed.

We would hope that it is unconscionable for Oregonians and elected legislators to allow a biased conviction to stand without review, especially for people who are currently incarcerated. The liberty that many of us take for granted is being wrongfully denied to fathers, mothers, uncles, brothers, and sisters all across Oregon.

The most basic form of justice is to allow the criminal justice system the opportunity to review these cases.

For victims of crime, these reviews will come with a significant impact. Revisiting harm, wondering if they could be harmed again, or potentially having to take time off from work to go to court is a tremendous burden to bear and one that the state should help shoulder.

More than the victim notification currently in place for all crimes, PSJ supports trauma-informed victim notification that is culturally specific and comes with referrals to community-based programs for on-going support even after court cases are completed.

SB 1008 (2019) has model language for victim notification. Further, the Rose Project developed a notification protocol around the testing of old sexual assault evidence kits that could provide guidance into how to do this notification. Finally, there must be investment in community-based services that are both culturally-specific and culturally responsive to meet the needs of victims as these cases go through review.

PSJ advocates for holistic approaches to public safety reform that support both those convicted of crimes and victims of crimes. We strongly support SB 1511 to remedy the harms of non-unanimous jury convictions and support ensuring a high level of services and care for victims.