

Submitter: Pete Lee, EMT

On Behalf Of: [self]

Committee: Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety

Measure: SB 5532

Co-Chair Nosse, Co-Chair Evans, Honorable Joint Subcommittee Members, and Staff:

For the record, my name is Pete Lee. I am a lifelong Oregonian and have served as a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician in Oregon for over 20 years. I am also a recent Vice Chair Emeritus of the Democratic Party of Oregon, with the pleasure of serving from 2019-2023.

I am writing in support of SB 5532 and POPs 101, 102, 103, 114, and 115. There are many prudent and sensible reasons to support this package of solutions, but I want to focus on two: efficiency and compassion.

We do not have infinite prosecutorial or public safety resources. With adequate resources allocated to public defenders and qualified defense investigators, prosecutors and defenders can meaningfully engage in interactive fact finding and effective prioritization of cases. Not all criminal matters are equal in gravity: as such, our justice system should efficiently focus on where it matters most.

As an EMT with an extensive background serving marginalized communities, I can attest to the gravity of the behavioral, mental health and substance abuse crises occurring all over our state: a substantial number of crimes have their roots in these tragic struggles. Incarceration is not treatment: we owe it to our communities to give fellow human beings an opportunity to heal and participate fully in society.

I urge all committee members to pass SB 5532 and fully fund POPs 101, 102, 103, 114, and 115.

I hope that you, your families, and the communities you serve remain safe, strong, and resilient.

Thank you for considering my testimony: I appreciate the gift of your time.

Sincerely,

-Pete Lee