

Submitter: Rob Melquist

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1015

1. Potential Redundancy with Existing Programs:

Oregon currently operates various programs targeting community violence through different agencies and organizations. Introducing a new grant program could lead to overlapping efforts and administrative inefficiencies, diverting resources from existing, potentially more effective initiatives.

2. Lack of Direct Law Enforcement Involvement:

SB1015 explicitly excludes law enforcement entities from eligibility for grants. Critics may argue that effective community violence reduction requires collaboration between community organizations and law enforcement. By sidelining law enforcement, the bill might miss opportunities for comprehensive strategies that combine community engagement with policing efforts.

3. Uncertain Efficacy of Funded Programs:

The bill emphasizes funding for “evidence-informed” services but does not clearly define the criteria for what constitutes sufficient evidence. This ambiguity could result in grants being awarded to programs without a proven track record, leading to ineffective use of public funds.

4. Administrative and Oversight Challenges:

The creation of an oversight board to advise on the grant program’s development and administration introduces additional layers of bureaucracy. Ensuring that this board operates effectively and without bias presents challenges, particularly in selecting members who are truly representative and knowledgeable about community violence issues.

5. Financial Implications and Sustainability:

Establishing and maintaining the proposed grant program requires significant financial investment. Opponents may question the sustainability of funding these initiatives, especially if the outcomes do not demonstrably reduce community violence in the targeted areas.

In summary, while the intent of SB1015 to reduce community violence is commendable, opponents raise concerns about potential redundancy, exclusion of law enforcement collaboration, unclear efficacy standards, administrative complexities, and financial sustainability.