

Submitter:

Kemp Larsen

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1015

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

I am writing to express my opposition to House Bill 1075, which mandates the Department of Justice to establish and fund a grant program aimed at reducing community violence in areas identified as experiencing disproportionately high rates of such incidents. While the intention behind this bill—enhancing public safety—is undoubtedly noble, I believe it raises significant concerns regarding practicality, cost, and the proper role of government.

First, the creation of yet another grant program under the Department of Justice risks stretching already limited state resources thin. Oregonians deserve transparency on how this initiative will be funded. Will it require new taxes, reallocation of existing funds, or increased borrowing? In an era of economic uncertainty, adding a new bureaucratic layer without a clear, proven strategy for success feels more like a gamble than a solution. The state should prioritize existing programs with demonstrable results rather than launching untested initiatives that may duplicate efforts already underway.

Second, the bill's focus on "eligible entities" to address community violence is vague and opens the door to inefficiency or misuse of funds. Without stringent oversight and clear metrics for success, there's a risk that money could flow to organizations with little accountability or expertise, diluting the impact on the very communities this bill aims to serve. History has shown that broad grant programs can sometimes devolve into political favoritism or wasteful spending, rather than delivering tangible outcomes.

Finally, I question whether this top-down approach is the most effective way to address community violence. Real change often comes from within communities themselves—through local leadership, grassroots efforts, and targeted law enforcement—not from state-directed grants that may not fully understand the unique needs of each area. By mandating this program, the state risks undermining local autonomy and imposing a one-size-fits-all solution on complex, localized challenges.

I urge you to reconsider House Bill 1075 and instead focus on strengthening existing tools—like supporting law enforcement training, fostering community-led initiatives, or addressing root causes such as poverty and education—without adding new layers of bureaucracy. Oregon deserves practical, proven solutions, not another costly experiment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.