

Submitter: Jacob Cosler

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1015

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony opposing Oregon Senate Bill 1015. While the bill's intention to reduce community violence through a grant program is commendable, I have several concerns regarding its implementation and potential effectiveness.

Lack of Specificity and Oversight

The bill mandates the Department of Justice to develop and implement a grant program but lacks detailed guidelines on the criteria for awarding these grants and the mechanisms for oversight. Without clear parameters, there is a risk of funds being allocated ineffectively, leading to minimal impact on community violence reduction.

Potential Redundancy with Existing Programs

Oregon currently has multiple initiatives aimed at addressing community violence. Introducing another program may lead to overlapping responsibilities and inefficiencies. It would be more prudent to evaluate and strengthen existing programs rather than creating new ones that may duplicate efforts.

Uncertain Fiscal Impact

The bill's summary indicates that there may be a fiscal impact, but no statement has been issued yet. Implementing a new grant program requires significant funding, and without a clear fiscal plan, it is challenging to assess the sustainability and financial implications of this initiative.

Need for Community-Centric Approaches

Effective violence reduction strategies often stem from grassroots, community-led initiatives that understand the unique challenges and needs of their neighborhoods. A top-down approach may not be as effective. Empowering local organizations and leaders with direct knowledge and experience could yield more meaningful results.

Recommendation

I recommend that the legislature conduct a comprehensive review of existing community violence prevention programs to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

Any new initiatives should be developed in close collaboration with community stakeholders, ensuring that they are tailored to the specific needs of the communities they aim to serve. Additionally, a detailed fiscal analysis should be conducted to ensure the program's sustainability without imposing undue financial strain on the state's budget.

In conclusion, while the goal of SB 1015 is laudable, the bill in its current form raises concerns about specificity, potential redundancy, fiscal responsibility, and the effectiveness of a top-down approach. A more strategic and community-focused plan would be more beneficial in addressing the complex issue of community violence.