



Submitted to the Senate Committee on Judiciary

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Testimony in Support of -1 Amendments to SB 1516

By: Shannon Wight, Deputy Director at Partnership for Safety and Justice

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the -1 amendments to SB 1516. For the record, my name is Shannon Wight, and I am the Deputy Director of Partnership for Safety and Justice (PSJ). PSJ advocates for public safety policies that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both. For over 25 years, our work has promoted community and public safety with policies that keep families together, reduce racial disparities, and invest across Oregon.

The -1 amendments to SB 1516 are technical in nature. They address a preexisting program created by the Legislature in 2022 called the Justice Reinvestment Equity Program (JREP). JREP supports the success of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) that has saved the state hundreds of millions in downstream prison costs by reinvesting resources into counties to reduce their reliance to send people into Oregon's correctional facilities.

JREP has historically operated as a partnership between the NW Health Foundation and the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC). Given the budgetary challenges of the moment, this program and its partners would benefit from increased flexibility in grant administration. NW Health Foundation has done an excellent job working with grantees, growing programs, and demonstrating substantial programmatic success. This bill provided CJC with this flexibility and we want to note that we worked with the director of CJC on this language.

One of the critical functions of JREP is technical assistance - helping sometimes smaller organizations who have been systemically unable to access traditional JRI resources with their program development, data reporting, and related tasks. Such work has led to growth in the ability of grantees to provide services, and impressive data reporting on programmatic successes

The additional flexibility would allow for continued partnership between the CJC and a potential new technical assistance provider should NW Health Foundation decide that they no longer have the ability or capacity to participate in the program.

This is a technical amendment to allow for this work to continue, and we urge your support of the -1 amendments to this bill.