

Submitter: Robert Melnick
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1516

Dear Chair Bowman and the House Rules Committee:

This testimony is in support of SB 1516A. Its pretrial release provision is critically important for the safety and security of Oregon's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Over the past two years, Asian American households across Oregon—including in Lane County—have often and repeatedly been targeted by organized burglary rings. These rings select victims based on race, surveil them for days or weeks, and strike when families are at work. These crimes are not isolated or opportunistic; they are coordinated, multi-jurisdictional, and designed to generate profit while avoiding accountability. As documented by the Asian American Council of Oregon and reflected in law enforcement reporting and court filings, repeated pretrial releases followed by flight have deprived victims of any opportunity for justice and have allowed this pattern of crime to continue unchecked. This is not okay and does not provide support for members of our community.

The harm to the AAPI community goes far beyond property loss. Families report fear of sleeping in their homes, reluctance to leave for work or attend cultural events, and anxiety that simply being publicly identified as Asian increases their risk of being targeted. Even community members who have not been burglarized describe ongoing fear and a loss of trust in the justice system when defendants are released despite clear indicators of flight risk and community danger.

SB 1516A does not mandate detention or roll back due process protections; it rightly restores judges' ability to make individualized determinations based on real-world risk. Allowing courts to consider flight risk and danger to the community in cases like these is essential to protecting vulnerable communities, restoring confidence in the justice system, encouraging reporting of crimes, and ensuring that every person and family can feel safe in their own home.

I strongly support SB 1516A and urge you to approve its passage. Thank you.