

Submitter: John Wilson  
On Behalf Of: SB 1516A  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1516

Dear Chair Bowman and Members of the House Rules Committee:

I support SB 1516A because Oregon needs a pretrial system that protects the public and ensures that people charged with serious crimes actually remain here to face trial.

I live in a rural area near a river corridor and close to I-5, and that leaves me feeling especially vulnerable to organized property crime. People can come onto rural properties quickly, steal from homes, shops, barns, and outbuildings, and then disappear just as quickly using major travel routes. When that happens, the damage is not only financial. It leaves residents feeling exposed, unsafe, and unsure whether the system will truly protect them.

What concerns me most is the possibility that someone charged with these kinds of crimes could simply post a relatively small bail amount and flee before trial. That is not real accountability. If a defendant poses a clear flight risk or a danger to the community, judges should have the authority to take that into account in making pretrial release decisions.

SB 1516A does not eliminate due process. It allows for a more realistic and individualized assessment of risk. That is exactly what is needed in cases involving organized theft, repeated property crime, and defendants with strong incentives to leave the jurisdiction.

Rural residents deserve to feel that our homes and property matter just as much as anyone else's. We also deserve a justice system that does not make it easy for offenders to vanish before trial. Please support SB 1516A.

Sincerely,  
John Wilson, MD