

Submitter: Barbara Wheatley
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1516

I support SB1516. While it is important not to refuse bail unnecessarily, it is equally important to refuse it when refusal is motivated. SB1516 is need to provide that essential balance.

I have been supportive of efforts to make it easier for defendants to be released on bail when feasible. But it is apparent that release cannot be a blanket policy — for example, it seems highly inappropriate when a defendant has no local ties and is connected to a broader criminal operation that supports him or her. The harm done by such release is apparent after the recent wave of burglaries targeting AAPI members of our community, apparently by an organized crime ring operating across Oregon and other states. I was reassured to hear that several perpetrators were located, arrested, and charged, but I was appalled to then hear that they were able to get out on bail and immediately vanish. How are members of the AAPI community to restore their confidence in the system and sense of safety in their homes? These burglaries have been devastating to the families involved and to the broader AAPI community. This is the obvious harm that has already happened, but there are many other scenarios one can imagine involving other crimes or other targeted groups or individuals. Feeling safe in our homes is essential to well-being and social stability.

I urge you to pass SB1516 to restore balance in bail decisions.