

Submitter: Leo Yao

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1516

I am testifying in support of SB 1516A because it addresses a real and growing public safety gap in Oregon's pretrial system.

In recent years, communities across the state have experienced organized, repeat property crimes carried out by individuals who have strong incentives and demonstrated ability to flee the jurisdiction before trial. When courts lack clear authority to consider flight risk and danger to the community, defendants are released under conditions that do not realistically ensure their appearance, undermining accountability and public confidence in the justice system.

SB 1516A does not mandate detention or roll back due process protections. Instead, it restores balanced, individualized decision-making by allowing judges to consider concrete risk factors—such as prior failures to appear, multi-jurisdictional activity, and organized criminal conduct—when determining pretrial release. Public safety depends not only on fair treatment of defendants, but on a system that can ensure people charged with serious and repeat offenses are actually present to face trial.

SB 1516A strengthens that balance and helps ensure that our justice system can function as intended.

The other two measures contained in the omnibus bill are protection of elected officials against threats and restriction of ALPR technology. The first would make it a felony to threaten an elected official. A large number of elected officials report threats in the course of their work, even when it's unpaid volunteer work for the community, so this is an attempt to try to protect and prevent such threats from causing people not to serve. The second provision relates to ALPR (automated license plate reader) technology and restricts the access and retention of data to minimize the opportunity for misuse of such data.