



PRESS RELEASE

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Oregon Takes Big Step Toward Ending Racial Profiling *HB 2355 will produce critical data, rebuild trust*

Following 18 months of discussions by the racial profiling task force—and years of discussions by public safety advocates and community groups—the Oregon House today made a major step toward ending racial profiling by law enforcement agencies.

[House Bill 2355](#) lays out a path to preventing profiling and reforms sentencing for simple drug possession and low-level, nonviolent offenders.

“Oregon cannot be the place we want it to be until everyone has equal justice,” says **House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland)**, who carried the bill. “This is a common-sense bill that will have a meaningful impact in our communities.”

Despite the work done by many law enforcement agencies to improve their practices, implicit bias still exists – even in the best police departments. HB 2355 continues the work to end profiling by law enforcement, which occurs when people are targeted based on their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, language, housing status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other personal characteristics.

The bill follows work done in 2015, when Oregon legislators joined 30 other states in passing legislation (HB 2002) to prohibit profiling by law enforcement. That law also convened a “Task Force on the Prevention of Profiling by Law Enforcement,” chaired by the Attorney General and composed of representatives of public safety organizations and community groups.

The Task Force worked for over 18 months to bring forth House Bill 2355.

“HB 2355 is a critical piece of legislation for ensuring fair policing practices and building trust between law enforcement and the public,” says **Rep. Tawna Sanchez (D-Portland)**. “This is an intersectional approach to addressing the inequities in our criminal justice system at every level, both on the ground in everyday interactions with law enforcement and in the courthouse through common-sense sentencing reforms.”

HB 2355 contains three major provisions:

- **End Profiling:** HB 2355 lays out a path to preventing profiling within Oregon through training, data collection, and increased accountability. It requires data collection for all pedestrian and traffic stops, regular training in implicit bias and practical skills to reduce profiling; annual reporting and review of stop data by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission (CJC); and technical guidance by the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) to correct patterns of profiling.
- **Reform Simple Possession:** HB 2355 reduces possession charges for Schedule I and II controlled substances to a Class A Misdemeanor. Significant racial disparities exist in drug enforcement – people of color are much more likely to be convicted of felony drug possession than their white counterparts, despite the fact that their usage rates are similar.
- **Reform Misdemeanor Provision:** The bill changes the maximum sentence for Class A misdemeanors from 365 to 364 days. This change is necessary because a 365-day long sentence is one of several triggers for mandatory federal deportation of green card holders, legal permanent residents, student-visa holders, refugees, and other legal non-citizens. This arbitrary difference between state and federal sentencing law has huge impacts on legal noncitizens who risk being torn apart from their families for low-level, nonviolent misdemeanors. With this change, legal non-citizens will not be automatically deportable for conviction of a low-level, misdemeanor offense.

HB 2355 passed the House with a vote of 36-23 and now will be taken up by the Senate..

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