

Racial profiling, drug sentencing bill clears Oregon Legislature

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A bill designed to tackle racial profiling by law enforcement and keep drug addicts out of jail passed by bipartisan vote Thursday in the Oregon Senate and heads to Gov. Kate Brown for her expected signature.

House Bill 2355 was carried by Sen. Jackie Winters, R-Salem, and passed 20-9. The House passed the bill Wednesday, 36 to 23.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, who carried the bill, said knowing more about the problem is the first step toward fighting racial profiling.

“Over the past few years, the Legislature has worked very hard to improve balance and fairness in our criminal justice system,” she said. “We’ve been working hard to address racial and economic barriers in our legal system and here is another chance to do that.”

The bill requires law enforcement agencies to collect and submit data on the age, race, ethnicity and sex of a person contacted during a traffic or pedestrian stop. The bill would also mandate that the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission and later, the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, review the data by July 2020 and provide advice and assistance to agencies struggling with profiling.

Only one-third of law enforcement personnel in Oregon have received

training to prevent profiling, Kotek said.

“We owe it to them to ensure they have the tools they need,” she said.

The measure also would charge people caught with user-level amounts of cocaine, methamphetamine and heroin with misdemeanors instead of felonies, replacing jail time with mandatory treatment. It also reduces the charge so those in the United States illegally, or on a visa, would not be automatically deported based on a user-level drug conviction.

“Felony sentences for small, user quantity amounts often carry heavy consequences including barriers to housing and employment which have a disparate impact on minority communities,” Kotek said.

Despite similar drug usage rates among all races, black men are more than two times more likely to be convicted of a drug offense than white men, according to the Criminal Justice Commission.

The bill allocates about \$430,000 to the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training for law enforcement training. The data collection system would be created by Oregon State Police using \$250,000 in funds. Almost \$350,000 would fund two positions with the Criminal Justice Commission and a \$750,000 grant from the Department of Transportation would fund the statewide collection of data.

Several people in the House and Senate voiced conflicting feelings about the

two-part bill.

Rep. Andy Olson, R-Albany, said he supported the first part addressing racial profiling 100 percent, but he was “deathly opposed” to the drug sentencing portion.

The scourge of methamphetamine and heroin addiction knows no racial boundaries, said Rep. Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte.

Perhaps, he added, those that are illegally in this country using methamphetamine or heroin should be sent back home.

Before voting no, Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, called the bill hypocritical and harmful.

“All of us bemoan the avalanche of drugs sweeping through our communities,” she said. “We lament the deaths of young people using opiates. Yet with this unbelievable disingenuous bill, we’re making it worse. Cleverly embedded in a bill that prohibits the odious practice of racial profiling, we are simultaneously accelerating the scourge of drugs decimating our communities and killing our kids.”

Johnson said she could not bear to read another article about a grieving family burying a child because officials made it easier to be an opiate user.

Many, however, lauded the decision. Winters said the profiling task force, led by Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, crafted the bill based on input from community members, district attorneys and

law enforcement, including Marion County Sheriff Jason Myers.

It is not giving a free pass to drug users, she said. Rather, the bill requires individuals to engage in strict community supervision and treatment.

“Our Task Force traveled throughout the state listening to Oregonians sharing their experiences with profiling,” Rosenblum said. “The stories we heard were profoundly important and deeply impactful. Our law enforcement partners deserve special recognition for their willingness to come to the table on this crucial issue.”

Unite Oregon Executive Director Kayse Jama said the community collaboration involved in the bill gives hope to the future of Oregon.

“The passage of this bill is a victory for Oregonians who have been targeted by law enforcement because of who they are, where they come from, or what they look like,” he said. “It’s a victory for law enforcement officers, who will receive needed training and an opportunity to rebuild trust in the communities they serve. And it’s a victory for all Oregonians, who can be confident that instances of profiling will be tracked and that law enforcement agencies will be accountable for their actions.”

For questions, comments and news tips, email reporter Whitney Woodworth at wmmwoodworth@statesmanjournal.com, call 503-399-6884 or follow on Twitter @wmmwoodworth

Vintage Mustang returned to Lyons owner after Facebook post goes viral

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In 2012, a vintage red Mustang with white race stripes pulled away from a wedding with cans rattling in tow. Bearing the words “Just Married,” the fully restored Ford sports car carried a newly wed couple.

Five years later, Dave Marsland stood over his 1966 Mustang, the same one his son had driven for his wedding. The front panels had been sheared from the frame, the fenders and rear bumper stripped, wires hung below the steering wheel, loose where the thief had hot-wired the car.

Marsland sighed. “It could be worse,” he said Friday, shaking his head.

Marsland, 66, discovered the theft on the morning of July 4, having returned the night before from a family trip. His tools were scattered around the garage in Lyons, the stereo had been torn from one of his other cars and his prized Mustang was missing. Police recovered the car in Salem early Friday morning.

But Marsland was right, it could’ve been worse, if not for a Facebook post by his son which detailed the theft and garnered more than 34,000 shares.

“He has been working on this car for years, so it is very special to him,” wrote Marsland’s son, Jordan, in the July 4 post.

Comments flowed in from car collectors around the country, sympathizing and keeping eyes peeled for the missing vehicle. Within days, a person who’d seen the vehicle provided information as to its whereabouts.

“We thank all the people who responded and were looking out for us,” said Marsland.

Police called around 2 a.m. Friday morning to share the news.

“I was very happy. I didn’t care what time it was, I was gonna go down there,” said Marsland. “With something like that you never know if you’ll ever see it again.”

Marsland bought the Mustang in Burbank, California, in 2002. It wasn’t quite as described on eBay, but Marsland wanted a project. He flew to Burbank and drove the car up to Salem.

“50 miles an hour, the whole trip. I was afraid to go much faster,” he said.

With the help of a mechanic friend, Marsland restored the Mustang. He drove it daily, for a time. And then began only taking it out for car shows with his sons and other special occasions.

He’s taken a step back in his restoration this week, but Marsland is just happy it was found, because the memories tied to the car can’t be replaced.

“You see the transformation, having it for so long, doing a little bit at a time,” he said.

Marsland said that the car may have been valued at around \$25,000 before the theft.

Dale Matthews, owner of vintage car dealer Memory Lane Motors in Portland, understands the different value that a collector car can hold — and the pain of losing one for good.

“It would be a heartbreaking thing,” said Matthews. “To me, that guy’s Mustang didn’t mean anything more than fair market value. To him, it meant three times that much.”

The Linn County Sheriff’s department is investigating at least one suspect, but Marsland isn’t concerned with retribution. After seeing his red Mustang in battered shape at the tow yard, he was ready to begin rebuilding — and he hopes the thief will, too.

“Believe it or not, we’ve actually prayed for the people that did this, be-



Dave Marsland inspects his 1966 Ford Mustang at a tow yard after police reclaimed it.

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Dave Marsland’s 1966 Ford Mustang before it was stolen.

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cause they need their lives changed too,” said Marsland. “My ideal scenario is: get my car fixed and that kid gets his life

fixed.”

If you have information regarding the theft of the Marsland’s Mustang, you can

contact the Linn County Sheriff’s office at 541-967-3950.