

Protect against profiling and stand by crime survivors: No on 105

Shannon Wight is the deputy director at Partnership for Safety and Justice, an Oregon nonprofit organization that's transforming society's response to crime with innovative solutions that ensure accountability, equity, and healing.

BY SHANNON WIGHT
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

Often when we think about the disparities in our criminal justice system, we think about people who are arrested for crime. And it is true those disparities are huge, even here in Oregon, but those inequities aren't limited to incarceration: victims of crime also face disparities in the justice system that stem from discrimination and racial profiling. That's why Partnership for Safety and Justice is joining the coalition Oregonians United Against Racial Profiling in voting No on Measure 105.

The intersection between criminal justice and immigration justice is well established today, but it wasn't always. About 10 years ago, I participated in an impactful gathering with about 50 advocates from across the country – some from criminal justice and others from immigration justice – to discuss the intersections between our work.

We shared stories, talked through our differences and worked to bridge the parallel-yet-often-separate arenas in which we worked. We found common ground in our anger at the way both systems tear families apart, and we connected through our passion to ensure our collective work should keep families united, particularly in the low-income and black and brown communities that experience the worst of those systems.

Today this intersection is known as "criminalization." The laws refer to the criminalization of people who are immigrants, which can be devastating in general, but they have a uniquely oppressive impact on victims: even after experiencing crime, survivors sometimes won't call the police because they fear the negative consequences that may result from interacting with law enforcement.

At Partnership for Safety and Justice, we believe that people convicted of crime and crime victims should have access to justice and to the support they need to rebuild their lives. This means ensuring that families can live safely, that local communities have the

resources they need to thrive, and that our state be guided by a vision of public safety that promotes equity.

These values are at the heart of criminal justice and immigration justice advocacy, and they are also at the heart of Oregon's history when, more than 30 years ago, the state recognized the need for everyone to be fairly treated by law enforcement following an incident at precisely this intersection.

In 1987, a U.S. citizen of Mexican descent, Delmiro Trevino, was wrongly targeted by police in Independence, Oregon. In that moment, one of the officers recognized the Oregonian as a longtime local and asked the others to let him go. Although Trevino suffered public humiliation, he did not lose his liberty. Public safety resources weren't spent unnecessarily, and hopefully some trust was restored when one of the officers stepped in to rectify the racist action of another officer.

That interaction ended better than it could have, and it led bipartisan state lawmakers to pass an anti-racial profiling law that protects people no matter their perceived nationality. Our ahead-of-its-time law has served us well, and today nearly 175 cities, counties, and states have followed Oregon's lead and adopted similar laws of their own.

Now the innocuously named Oregonians for Immigration Reforms, an organization identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a hate group, is seeking to eliminate that law with Ballot Measure 105. As a result, Oregon voters face a choice this November: whether to maintain a law that protects families and communities or to further deepen racial disparities in our criminal justice system.

But Oregonians are coming together to defeat Measure 105. Leading the effort is Oregonians United Against Profiling, a coalition of nearly 500 elected officials, law enforcement, businesses and organizations, including Partnership for Safety and Justice. As advocates for criminal justice system transformation, many of us with personal

stories of being impacted by crime and criminalization, we know that repealing this important anti-profiling law will have devastating impacts for victims of crime and violence.

Oregon's current law protects crime victims because it allows people who have experienced trauma or witnessed violence to access the justice system without fear – fear of racial profiling, fear of being arrested themselves and fear that they or their loved ones may be deported. The current law also protects witnesses to crime, family members and people like Trevino from unnecessarily entering the criminal justice system.

While victims in Oregon today are not free of concerns about racial profiling, we do have a law that protects victims by ensuring that local law enforcement is not allowed to racially profile and report their interactions to federal immigration officers at ICE.

This protection is essential for victims, and we hope you'll join advocates who seek to maintain this public safety law. When victims fear the justice system, they are less safe, they miss out on essential trauma recovery services and their voices are silenced. We urge you to protect public safety, protect crime survivors and protect Oregon's anti-racial-profiling law. Vote No on Measure 105.

To learn more about how Partnership for Safety and Justice advocates for public safety and criminal justice reform, sign up at safetyandjustice.org/signup. To support the No on Measure 105 campaign, visit orunited.org.

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